Juan Iñigo Carrera's Workshop on *Karl Marx's* Capital[1]

Volume 1: THE PROCESS OF PRODUCTION OF CAPITAL

[1] Transcribed by Álvaro R. R. [@Pignocchio]. I have tried to keep the transcription faithful to the orality of the workshops (including localisms), but modifying redundancies, repetitions, etc. in order to facilitate and shorten the reading. In any case, the recordings can be reviewed and I would appreciate it if I could be informed of errors that I have overlooked, disagreements regarding the fact that I have omitted a small part of the interventions of the workshop attendees in case of redundancies (from session 33 onwards I have tried to reproduce them almost always in their entirety). In this version, which I hope will be final, all acronyms were removed except "SNALdPaI" for "Socially necessary abstract labor performed privately and independently", due to their recurrence and length of expression, and "M" and "D" in certain contexts. The text in square brackets indicates explanatory comments by the transcriber to speed up the verification of the correspondence between what is written and what is recorded. Explanatory or referenced footnotes are at their own expense. The titles usually refer to the section, chapter and subsections of *Capital* in question, adding in square brackets questions that were raised outside of Marx's immediate development (questions of method, doubts, discussions, deployments beyond Marx, etc.). Thick lines mark the end of each workshop meeting. Any proposal for improvement is welcome and will be – and is being – considered. The complete workshop finished transcribing in the early hours of a Wednesday, June 26, so: see you next Wednesday.

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Workshop Introduction

[...] We are going to try to start by going to the core of the question of the meaning of the workshop with one of the questions that you had in the survey, which I asked with one intention, and universally you read it with another intention. Something that we are going to refer to later again regarding whether the question is to interpret, how to interpret what one supposes to be clear, and for the others it is clear that they assumed that what was clear was the opposite of what I had thought. The question is: what are they here for? Why are you interested in the workshop? The idea of my question was that there should be only one answer from the list of possible answers. And in a moment of weakness I said: I'm going to put "Main answer" and "Secondary answer" (with the idea that there were going to be only 2 answers), and that enabled the system to fill all the rows. And you interpreted filling all the ranks. I am going to take some of the answers that appear to see how far we are going to be able to answer what appears, what link it has with the development of the workshop.

So, I look at the answers and take them like this, some of them, because I had put a very large list. One was "Deepening Marx's thought." That answer immediately raises a question in me: why do you want to delve deeper into Marx's thought? Where does the interest come from, what is the purpose? Another answer was "The difference between Marxist dialectics and Hegelian dialectics." And this answer leads me to the same question as before: and why go deeper into the difference between these two dialectics? Is it a purely intellectual concern? Do I want it for something? Do I want to enrich my subjectivity by being clear about this? Or is there a reason behind that interest? I take another possible answer: "The debates within Marxism." And I have the same question I had before: is it curiosity? Do I have anything at stake with regard to the debates in Marxism? Why the need to delve into that? And also, a need that implies – it is proposed that way – a work simply with Volume 1 (which was raised in the *email* we sent you, for two years)? And if I'm willing to dedicate 2 hours a week, but for 2 years to this, is it simply a need that runs out in that I want to know more about this individual, about these debates that are going on, or do I have something at stake that goes beyond this?

To make a long story short, in general, the axles had that character. Y... I want to see the answer that was just in the chat. Jorge's answer is: "To know in depth and dialogue with those who know Marx's work", but why? What is at stake in that interest? There was one of the answers that had a different content. He was referring not to knowing but to "doing", but also to doing one's own personally. And when one looks in general at the interest in something called the critique of political economy (a subtitle of Marx's work), when the term political economy appears, what immediately confronts us with this theme is a problem of political action. From whom? For Marx it would be his. The question at stake is the question of political action itself. It is a problem of knowledge. And knowledge – we will dwell on this later – is the knowledge of one's own determinations, of one's own subjectivity. And in this case, the axis of the question that is placed in the title itself, is one's own condition as a political subject. I'm going to try to take it in this way.

There was a workshop in which the answers were verbal and there were many responses of: "I want to go deeper" in this aspect, in another aspect... And there was a participant who immediately raised this: I come to the workshop because I see what is happening in my neighborhood, in people who are close to me, and I want to transform that situation. I want to do something to transform that situation. And so the starting question that one can find beyond what appears under an "intellectual" concern is a question about what to do, and about a political "what to do". When one is confronted with the text, what one is asking is why this is going to contribute to the ability to organize my action. If one looks at it (and then I am going to ask why one can confront *Capital*, the text, in this way)... I am going to take it in a situation that immediately touches me personally, which I suppose must be shared by many more of those present.

We here in Argentina, as teachers, are in an action of struggle for our salary (to take it in simple terms). And I can face this situation and say: well, it's a problem of struggle for wages. And by knowing that I already have the answer I need to know what to do. Now, it may be that when I am confronted with this question I will say: it is not enough for me to know this in order to be able to decide how I organize my action. If I'm fighting for a salary, the first thing I need to know is what a salary is. If I say I'm struggling, then what I'm saying is: if I have an antagonistic relationship with someone because of my salary. I could also say: well, I already have what it takes to act, that is my enemy and I already know what I have to do in the face of that. Or for some reason that at this point I cannot explain, it may be that I say: it is not enough for me to know that it is a salary problem and that I have an antagonistic relationship with the subject who pays me. I have to ask myself why this antagonistic relationship is characteristic. And suppose I answer that what is at stake here is the distribution of income. And again it may be that with that answer he says: I already know what I have to do. And for some reason—and I'm going to project it to you—you are not satisfied with that answer, because if not, then you would not be wondering about what Marx is saying about the movement and the relationship that you have as members of society.

And then, one continues to wonder about his "what to do" as a political subject. He looks at the distribution of income and says: in this society there are classes differentiated by the form of income: the form of my income is a salary, I am a wage earner, and the form of income of those with whom I am confronted is the class of capitalists who pay wages. Then I can say again: I already have what I needed to know to organize my action. And I may say: but I still don't know how to organize my action. Because in order to organize it, if I have to confront the capitalists, I need to know what capital is. If I don't know, how am I going to confront the capitalists? I'm going to be unarmed in front of these guys. And so I look at what capital is and say: it is a sum of money that produces a profit. And this is enough for me. And then that answer asks me a question: what is money? How can I know what income distribution is and face it as a conscious subject in the struggle for its distribution if I cannot explain what money is? A more or less immediate elementary answer that I can give myself is: money is something that is used to exchange commodities. And so to know what money is, I need to know what a commodity is. And in this process—which I am presenting very crudely—I found that in order to answer myself about what to do, I have to answer myself

about what Marx's text presents to me in the first paragraph where he says [paraphrasing]: in societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails, wealth is presented as an immense accumulation of commodities, and the commodity as its elementary form. Consequently, our analysis starts from the commodity. This is how the text begins.

So, several observations regarding this. On that path we never stop asking ourselves what to do, about our own subjectivity. And what we find is that within our subjectivity is the commodity. It seems that we have passed from our condition as human subjects to these things that are commodities. And yet, we were always looking at ourselves in our condition as subjects. We have no explanation so far of what commodities are. Precisely what Marx proposes, who has taken this path that I present here (in some places it is insinuated, thus referred), what we arrive at in this process is that starting point. And now we have to go further, we have to answer what a commodity is, but not simply because we are curious to know it. It is because when we answer ourselves about what a commodity is, we are going to answer ourselves about what we ourselves are as human subjects. And more specifically, what we are as political subjects. And that is what the process that we propose to develop is about. It is not a problem of economics. When you look at what starts with the commodity, it can look like an economics book. It is not: it is a book that so far deals with our subjectivity.

But in addition, another question related to this arises [...]: why the hell instead of staying calm and doing as many other people do, who quickly know what form they have to give to their political action (it may be that they don't give a damn what form they are going to give it and that they resolve that they do what comes to their mind at that moment)...? Why do we ask ourselves this question? It might seem that we are "cooler", more lively, more intelligent or restless people, and that is why we ask ourselves these questions that others do not ask. And that response would not only be sterile, but would destroy us as political subjects. What we have to answer is not only what to do, but why what to do that we are proposing has a determination that makes it face political action in a way, let's call it, "peculiar" within the general movement of the life of society. This is also the answer we have to find in the development of asking ourselves about our own subjectivity, a determined subjectivity that, as such, is faced with the need to ask itself about its own determination beyond what is "normal". And that is what we are going to put at stake in the progress that we propose to develop. This is the first part of what we wanted to present to you at this kick-off meeting. Then we are going to move forward on concrete ways that make up this objective that we are proposing.

This is a tool, but it's not a tool simply out of abstract curiosity. One is always asking oneself what to do, for one's own subjectivity. Knowledge is always the knowledge of what powers are held as a subject with respect to the powers that the environment offers to that subjectivity, how to operate on that environment. When you are getting to know what you are doing is organizing your action. And I want to emphasize one question: it is not the action of other subjects, it is not simply or abstractly the action of the proletariat. The question is what am I as a subject, who recognize myself as a member of the proletariat. It is not an abstract

problem of what the proletariat is, but I have to answer myself what I do as an individual organ of the proletariat.

[...] I might add: it is not a philosophy book. Because the problem of action began with the question of what do I do, not with an abstract question of "What am I?" I have to act all the time, not only in this, so I always have to answer what I am as the subject of that action. From someone who stated precisely in contrast to action that "Philosophers have done nothing but interpret the world in different ways, but what is at stake is to change it"[2] (and we look at knowledge not as something external to action, but as the moment in which action is organizing itself). and who also proposed that philosophy had ended with Hegel, the contrast that appears there is between an interpretation of the world and the action of transforming it. What we are not going to do is interpret the world by interpreting Marx in some way. We are going to face what Marx says and we are going to ask ourselves if in our own social bond, what Marx says we recognize or not. And consequently we are going to permanently subject to criticism what Marx is deploying, we are going to ask him that we can reproduce that process for ourselves. And in this sense I want to contrast it with many statements that appear as: it is a problem of what Marx meant. But the only one who could answer that is Marx himself, and what we are not going to do is that Marx's text literally says something and it is said that this cannot be what he meant. Because it clashes with Marx's entire development. If Marx wrote something and we do not find that same something when we confront capital (our social relation, not abstract, but concrete), we are not going to pretend that Marx really meant what we want to say. If we find something different, we will say that this is what we find.

I strongly emphasize this because we are not going to interpret the text: we are going to face the text as a tool that allows our process of knowledge of our determinations (that is what the book is about, it is not about other subjects who are out there), what the text is going to allow us is that instead of discovering gunpowder every time, We can make our process of knowledge individually original, as a process of recognition from the social point of view. It is a knowledge that has an objective existence, which we can appropriate. Instead of thinking about the initial question all our lives, we will then have the potentiality of someone who wondered about this and said: this is what I find. What we are going to do is say: Marx found that, let's see if we find the same thing or not. And if we don't find the same thing, we'll think about it very well, because the individual who did all this work... We are not going to lightly say that we are going somewhere else and it is over, we are going to look at it very carefully, and if we continue to find something that was different we are going to say that this is what I need to organize my action, if I do not find the other, it is alien to me, it does not answer the question of what to do.

There is a discussion linked to this (I think it was more or less general in Latin America, but in Argentina it had a lot of presence in the decades of the 60's and 70') about what the text of Capital is for. And it seemed that, well, it's about England in the mid-nineteenth century, and that has nothing to do with Argentina

[2] Reference to number XI of Marx's Theses *on Feuerbach* (1845), published by Engels as an appendix to his work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1888).

in the twentieth century. And this continues to be repeated today and worse, because 50 more years have passed. In addition, this approach appeared reinforced... I'm going to take a very simple example. Marx's development in *Capital* shows how the development of machinery imposes a permanent technological renewal and the capitals that do not maintain this movement are defeated in competition. When one looked at Argentina at that time, one finds this situation: the capitals that operate in Argentina in the industrial sector do so with a productivity of labor that is a fifth of the productivity of the sector in the United States. But they are the same capitals that are in the US or in European countries, and here they operate with this productivity. So the answer was that this does not serve to explain the situation in Argentina, because it not only referred to situations from the mid-nineteenth century but also that what I said was going to happen, is the opposite of what is happening here. Faced with this situation, one can take different paths.

One that is incoherent and from my point of view wrong, which is to say: "That doesn't matter to me", and now I explain what is happening in Argentina by stopping at the immediate appearances that here is this, so-and-so came... And it was over. And there are two answers that from my point of view are coherent, but one is wrong, which is to say: well, then I start from scratch and ask myself again what this process of social life is, and I do not use this knowledge that is objectified in the text. And the answer that for me is coherent and correct is: well, I'm going to do this process that I proposed before, I'm going to move forward on my path as a process of original knowledge and recognition from the social point of view. And when I find something that the text tells me that it is going there and I see that it is going here, I am not going to say that I throw it away, but that I have to develop a process of original knowledge from the social point of view to answer why the concrete form that this general determination has has these specific forms that appear as the negation of the general determination, because it is carried out under these concrete forms. In this sense, we can say that we have two advantages over Marx.

The first is that we have Marx's text and we can use it as a tool. What took Marx's life and he could not finish, we will be able to do much more quickly, and consequently we will be able to go further and ask ourselves about concrete forms of our political action that go beyond what Marx could. The second is that we are going to look at the capitalist mode of production, which has 150 years of development more than it had in Marx's time. So, what Marx could have barely hinted at and developed where it is heading (with extraordinary scope), we are going to find that this barely hinted at is now fully developed, and among other things, that we are the bearers of that development. And then instead of trying to discover in a barely hinted at thing where he is walking, we are going to see where he walked, and with a much fuller development we are going to be able to see where he is walking and who is the subject of that walk.

When Marx wrote *Capital* and said that it was a work for the working class, the universe of the working class in England had gone through more or less 3 years of schooling. This was the development of the "intellectual" training of the mass of the English working population, which was the most developed in the world. We

have many years of educational training. So, Marx in the text raises where education is heading just looking at a society where there are 3 years of schooling, and we can look at what happened with education, where many of the countries in which we reside the average educational training is 12 years. And we are the bearers of that development. And if we start looking at ourselves from a problem of wages and we say that it is the problem of the working class, we immediately look at ourselves and say: this is one of the transformations that have occurred since Marx wrote *Capital* to today, and it gives us a weapon, an enormous potentiality. Marx has the reference in another text saying: "The anatomy of the human being is the key to the anatomy of the ape", because what is seen in the human being is the developed ape. This has two issues: what we see is the capitalist mode of production much more developed than Marx could confront it. But on the other hand the problem of action is always about something that is in potential. As a monkey, you have to be able to see what potential you have to be engendered as a human being. We see a more developed subject, but this does not solve the problem for us; What we have to answer is what we are going to produce, where we are moving forward with our action. And that is potential, it is not realized, otherwise it would no longer be a problem how to organize an action of the working class.

I am going to make an observation of something we did in the development that we were advancing. We made an analysis of our political subjectivity. We ask ourselves about the necessity of our action, of capital, of money, of the commodity... And if we look at the analysis we did, we did not do it by looking at what is repeated and what is not repeated. He was asking for what need, what is this that we have in front of us. And that's how we got to the commodity, that's where we stopped that analysis. We did not start from formulating concepts that allow us to move forward, we did not say: "Capital is this, this and this", and then we no longer need to continue asking ourselves, now we can answer ourselves about what to do; What we were doing was confronting the real concrete ways in which we were recognizing a need for our action, a determination for our action. This is how we are going to advance in all the development, and we are always going to ask ourselves about this: this is this, well, and then what is this, why this and this...? And then we will see what we do with the answers we find. I don't want to complicate further what must already be quite complicated.

When we begin to answer these questions, the need to answer ourselves in more concrete ways than the ones we are going to be looking at will surely appear. At a certain point we are going to begin to answer what the commodity is: we are not only going to analyze it but also unfold the determinations of the commodity. And I bet that when we start answering each other, questions about capital will come up. And my answer is going to be systematically: "I don't know what capital is." Now I know what a commodity is, but I have to go on to be able to answer myself what capital is. If I found it analytically before arriving at the commodity, now I am going to answer from the development of the commodity what capital is. And I am going to try to be very strict in that answer, with several experiences that support it.

One of them is what happened with the 1st and 2nd workshops that we developed regularly 20 years ago (before we had done a more informal workshop). It was two years, so I had done a first workshop of Volume 1 the first year, with a lot of enthusiasm, a significant presence, a lot of discussion, and it had been flowing satisfactorily for me. And I started a 2nd workshop while we were doing the 2nd year with the first year, Volume 1, and it was a disaster, it was dissolving very quickly. And in the face of that, I was overcome with desperation and began to advance answers to maintain the interest of the person who formulated the problem. And at the same time I was very uneasy with what I was doing. So I asked the people in the workshop who were in the 2nd year about this situation and what they thought of what I was doing, which I had never answered them in advance. And there was one participant who rarely intervened and systematically sat next to the door. And my image was that this guy, at the next meeting was not going to be there, but he intervened in front of this in a way that for me was surprising. He told me: "I totally disagree with you giving answers. If you had given me an answer, I would not have come anymore. I kept coming because I always had one thing to answer that I lacked the answer." I learned my lesson, the workshop that had been dissolving barely survived and I stopped giving answers. This is one of the axes of the way it works. I often say: now I have a debt (the question I didn't answer), when the time comes I'm going to try to pay that debt.

Beyond this anecdotal reason, there is a reason that Marx raises that is reflected at a certain point in the development of Volume 1 on a question that is going to appear and has two answers to the same question. The first is a letter to Engels, who tells him: get ready, because they are going to jump on your neck telling you that everyone knows that this is not so. Because the political economy of Adam Smith and David Ricardo was clear that this was not the case in concrete determination, although they could not explain it. And Marx's answer is: "If I wanted to answer that in advance, I would destroy my dialectical method." And then he adds: but in reality this is not a defect of the dialectical method, but a virtue. Because it makes that... (and makes a reference to a term that is the individual who "is a square"; it has the word "bourgeois" inside but in Spanish it is not used in that sense)... the vulgar economist is exposed before his time. And then in the corresponding point of the development that he has been making in the text he puts again: if I wanted to answer this, I have to answer this first, this and this, and all this is not here. And then he makes the sentence more impersonal (I don't remember if it is this phrase or not), saying: economists, unlike Spinoza, believe that ignorance is a sufficient reason. They cling to appearance against content. It is proposed by Marx then that one cannot anticipate that whose necessity one has not deployed, and practical experience says that it does not work with respect to the objective that we set ourselves and that we invite you to share. The downside of this is that it is a distressing process. Because one is with the questions that need to be answered and the answer one receives is: so far there is no answer, let's go ahead and see if there is an answer (maybe there isn't), and in some questions this goes to the end of Volume 3, not three meetings later. If not, he changed the content of the process he was developing.

There was one more, operative question, which is the following: we are not going to start with the prologues or with the postface of the different editions of

Capital for various reasons, also because of some specific anecdotal experience. Many years ago, around 1970, I participated in a workshop defined as "Reading", not working with *Capital*, equivalent – if you like – to this. And the reading of the prologues led to meetings and meetings of discussion of things that are not developed, and it was reduced to each one interpreting what he wanted to say. The experience was extremely unproductive for me. One looks at Marx himself, and when he writes the prologue to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (a work prior to this one, which was to be the development that he later realizes will never be able to finish and then takes up and gives it another structure in *Capital),* he says: I had written a long preface and then I realized that it makes no sense to put development ahead what must be developed. It can only be annoying that what comes next is being put in front of you. And one can see in that a reference to Hegel.

Both in *the Science of Logic* and in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* he makes an observation in his prologue saying: what can one say in a prologue (before what, for him—what he is going to develop—is the development of science as such)? The only thing he can put are insubstantial, external things, because otherwise he would have to put science before science. This is what happens with prologues: either they refer to insubstantial and anecdotal things or they put science before science. And Marx himself, in my opinion, in the prologue to the *Contribution* does something that he himself criticized, but saying: for me this is a synthesis, and from there I continued. And this is the reference that he is going to put to the development of the productive forces, the relationship between the economic base and the legal and political superstructure. Where it says: from my studies I came to this conclusion, and from there I continued on this basis. The discussions about the base/superstructure relationship are how to interpret what Marx said in that prologue: whether the base determines or conditions, whether the superstructure has an autonomy or not... And it is to turn a synthesis into an abstract starting point.

So, we are going to start with the commodity, with the first paragraph of *Capital*, accompanying the development that Marx is making and asking ourselves whether we recognized it or not. And then in some cases I am going to propose to you: let's look at this again asking ourselves such a thing. And if there is general agreement we do it, if not, we go ahead accompanying the text. We are not going to use any text other than *Capital*; and here too there is an issue at stake. Everyone reads what they want, but we in the workshop are not going to say: "Well, but so-and-so solves this problem for us and takes us forward." The observation I want to make is this: I consider Marx to be a strongly coherent author, consistent in his development, whom we have to subject to criticism. There is a letter from one of Marx's daughters where she twice refers to games they played in the family. One of them was what is your favorite phrase. And two phrases of Marx appear: "Doubt yourself" and "Subject everything to criticism". An individual who said this, we are going to subject him to criticism. But if this individual throughout his life wrote things that in his culminating work says the opposite of what he said in previous texts, we are not going to say that it is a problem of senility, that he began to write incoherently. It is a process of maturation: he writes drafts to critique political economy, he rewrites them and transforms them into drafts for *Capital*, he makes a

1st edition of *Capital* and then what he does is to reformulate chapter I and structure it in a different way. And when you look at what was in the initial and subsequent versions, you find that there is an advance in that development. Not content with this, in the 3rd and 4th German editions, Engels took notes that Marx had in a copy of Capital that belonged to him saying: "This must be modified, this too...", etc.

So he is an individual who subjected his production to criticism throughout his life. And one can find a clear unity in the development that he has been doing, and that what he is doing is answering what he had enunciated as a problem but did not have the answer. What do you find in many discussions? "Ah, but what he said in the draft is not the same as what he said in the 2nd or 3rd edition, so I'm going to take what he said in the draft," but in the 2nd edition he said the opposite. If it is a problem of interpretation, everyone interprets what they want. If one wants to interpret that what it said in the draft was better than the final text, one interprets what one wants. But if you have been accompanying the development of the author, you cannot say that you are going to choose what you want: you have to see if you find that or not. I take an example at the end of Volume 3, of brutal questions of attributing to Marx something that is not in the text and that also never again appears a reference to that question, and saying "what he said is this, and therefore that and that is invalid".

Discussing the absolute rent of land, Marx writes in a draft: absolute rent has a magnitude determined by this... And in the next draft it says: the magnitude can go from this to this, it has this range and it depends on circumstances where it is going to stay. An author is going to criticize it and says: Marx in the draft that is finally published as Volume 3, recognizes that this is so. But we are going to take what he says in the previous draft because here it is clearer what must be criticized. So it is to say: I am going to criticize what the author himself criticized and corrected himself, because it serves me better to attack him. In this sense, there are many drafts of Marx's texts, which are very expressive (because one sees Marx's process of thought and elaboration), but what one cannot do is to contrast something that is in place in that incipient development with what for Marx was the definitive text. We are going to stick to what he is proposing there, to the structure that is in the text. And I think that's it. Once I had the question of whether there was a lot of mathematics in the workshop. And all qualitative determinations have magnitude, there are quantitative relationships... Now: the work does not revolve around mathematical knowledge.

I would like to make two clarifications. I always make this statement: singers have a repertoire. One too, and the examples he gives and developments he makes are more or less the same. And when you get old you have the problem that you want to repeat things more. The objective we pursue with the workshop is not to convince anyone. Sometimes I expound with emphasis because, since it is a problem of knowing one's own subjectivity, I put my subjectivity at stake, and sometimes I go too far with the emphasis not wanting it. But I make the clarification at the outset: we do not want to evangelize anyone. If at the end of a course one of the participants tells me: "You convinced me" I say: "I was wrong in what I was doing". The objective is to confront you with what is appearing in the

development of Marx's text, to ask ourselves about this... It's putting them in front of this. And then everyone does with that what they need, for what is going to be useful to them. There are no truths revealed, everything is subject to criticism. And each one needs to submit that to his own criticism, not to say that since So-and-so subjected it to criticism, it is already so, he must know that it is so.

There is another question which is that of method. I made a reference to the dialectical method and analysis, and contrasted it with the normal form of analysis proper to logical representation. But we are not going to start by talking about the method. At one time I did about three workshops on the dialectical method, and at a certain point I said: this is nonsense. Because the only way to appropriate the method is for each one to develop that form of knowledge for himself. And he ended up having to say: "Well, believe me it is so," because trying to present the method by himself, he ended up being completely external. We are going to use that method, we start today with that analysis, and we are going to mark contrasts with the method of logical representation and dialectical reproduction. And when we have advanced to a point where the question of scientific knowledge appears in the text itself (which is going to be released next year), if you agree, we are going to stop and look at the synthesis of what we have already been doing with respect to the dialectical method. So, if at any time any of the drafts are useful to us, we are going to feed that with the draft, but we are not going to say: "'The text literally says 'a', and since I interpret that in the draft it said 'z', we are going to replace 'a' with 'z'".

There was a question that Claudio asked about political action. I took the issue of political action in its immediacy, I could not answer myself further because I said that in order to know what form to give to this action I had to look at what a political action was, the distribution of income, the classes... So I could not answer what form of political action we have in front of us. With respect to potency it is: one always acts on powers that are to be realized. Once they were carried out, that's it, the action is over. One always performs powers. He organized his action to realize a certain power and he carried it out, when he performed it he transformed his environment, and consequently, himself as a subject who is now again the bearer of powers that can be the same as before or different as that transformation takes place. But action always refers to something that exists at present as a power to be realized. One wonders if he is going to do it or not, or which of them he is going to do. When we advance a little more it seems to me that it will make more sense to dwell more on this because I know that the terms "need", "determination" today produce different types of reactions. We will see it as we go along.

[Replying to chat] We start by saying that we have a question about what to do. And we are going to see what the text brings us, we are going to be using it to see if we recognize our subjectivity in that development that appears in the text. And if we come to a point where we say: "We answer each other in this way and I don't need to go that far," we are going to see if, having gone so far as to get to the commodity, at least, when we go back to the concrete forms of our action, we can answer ourselves something about our "what to do." each one to himself.

I am going to make a clarification: in this work that we are going to do, unlike formal university courses, there is no exercise in coercion. In formal courses, coercion is a condition for the development of the course, but here it does not exist. So, the progress with the reading is subject to what you advance with that reading. I am going to move forward. There was a colleague at the Center[3] who at one time also gave the workshops of Volume 1, and he adjusted to the progress of the reading that the participants in the workshop did, and that makes it impossible to advance later, it makes it very complicated because he says: if you don't have anything to discuss, I can't go ahead. We are going to move forward, but it is up to you to accompany the progress we are making, discussing it, submitting it to doubt, criticism, etc.

With respect to the editions of *El Capital*, this situation appears in the survey: the vast majority (64%) have the translation of Siglo XXI, 13% have the old edition of FCE[4], 13% have the new edition of FCE (the translator is the same [Wenceslao Roces]), there is a smaller % of Akal and several of Fazio's translations from different publishers. there is a request for suggestions and then some translations of editions taken from FCE. On the internet there is a similar one but it is not literally the same, so I guess she died accused of plagiarism, but hey. I am going to raise several questions about translations.

The first issue is that when I began my training process, the 1st edition in Spanish, which was Justo's, was no longer in circulation, and the one that had full circulation was FCE's. So, I use a guide to make the exhibition and my references are taken from the FCE edition. What is it that is normally raised (which I do not know if it is so) regarding the translation of *Capital* into Spanish? That German and Spanish grammar kick each other. So, translators have had to choose between a hard Spanish grammar that tries to reflect that of the original, or a fluent one that adds words and things that may be debatable to be so. When you look at the translations, what you will find is that they do not simply have this difference, but also have a certain approach that comes from the translator, and that they correspond to different historical moments and political movements. I clarify that I know much less about Sacristán's and Fazio's translations, I was consulting them for some doubts, but...

So, when one looks at the translation by Roces [FCE], which translated a lot of Marx's works, it is accused of having a certain ironing of the dialectical character of the exposition, which corresponds to the line of the communist parties in general of the 40s (the translation begins even earlier). And Roces is accused of having distorted the translations (we will see later what this means in the words of those who accuse him). What the original edition of FCE does have is that in Volume 1 it does not, in Volume 2 quite a lot, and in Volume 3 it is a shame, is that they have been replicating the same edition they did the first time, with typographical errors, skipping paragraphs... With the aggravating circumstance that where the text says, for example, that surplus value goes down and the rate of surplus value rises, in the translation it says the opposite. Then one reads, and since the problem is not to interpret the text but to answer oneself about what one has in front of oneself, he

[3] The CICP (Center for Research as a Practical Critique).
[4] Fondo de Cultura Económica.

says: but the printing system has changed since that time, it is no longer done with badges, they could have corrected the text and it is exactly the same. Now: Volume 1 is decently good, with some things that Roces says and that one reads and says "but this is not coherent" (I will make some observations). This is about the 1st edition. On the 2nd I am going to make other observations. It is said that the edition of Siglo XXI is more in line with dialectical development but is harsher in terms of translation. And one of its hardness is that in Spanish there is the "de..." such a thing, pronoun, and in German it is declined, there is no such structure. Then one begins to clash with the adjectivation of the working day, which becomes "working day", but then the product of work becomes "labour product". Then he ends up forcing something that in Spanish grammar has a different structure.

I always used as a reading test, as a translation test, a paragraph that Marx has in the prologue to the 1st German edition. An observation: the edition of Siglo XXI was published when I had already been working with the FCE edition and I continued with that one, but not because it has any virtue that says: "This is what should be used", I have a mountain of criticism. My daughter participated in one of these workshops a few years ago and bought the FCE edition, which she had already seen at home and according to her because I recommended it to her. After the first meeting in which I criticized, the FCE met and he told me: "But you made me buy some crap! Why did you make me spend the money on this thing that is full of defects?" So... It's not as crowded. The phrase I use said (Marx says) [quote from memory]: "In this book neither the capitalist nor the landlord is painted in a rosy light. But someone who, like me, conceives of the natural historical process of the economic formation of society, is not going to hold people responsible for what they do as personifications of certain social relations, even if they believe that they are above those relations." And what caught my attention... I had already read the notes or *Marginal Glosses to Wagner's treatise on political economy*, which is one of the last things Marx wrote, where he says: this guy (Wagner, one of the incipient neoclassical economists of the Austrian School), this *beast* (he puts it in Latin), did not understand anything about my method: "In the first place, I never start from concepts. Therefore, I do not have to divide the concept of value (because Wagner speaks of its division into exchange value and use value). Where I start from is the commodity, which is the simplest concrete in today's society."

And then, I said: but how can an individual who says this, in the prologue of his book, say that he "conceives" things in a certain way? I consulted different translations, I consulted with a Marxist with a lot of training and also made in Europe, for whom I feel a deep personal respect because he also put his person where his ideas were, although I disagree with the proposals he makes... Well, we discussed it with him, grabbed a dictionary, and among the meanings of I don't remember what word in German it was, "conceive" appeared within a bunch of words. And I said to anyone who could have a link with the German language: how do you translate this word? Until one of those people came to me and said: in my house there is a German dictionary of philosophy from the nineteenth century, and what it says about that word is that it means "I am facing", "I am looking at this". And I said: yes, it couldn't be "conceive".

Now: this is what happens with the translation of FCE. But what does the translation of Siglo XXI say in that sentence? Where he reaches the point of the "economic formation of society", he translates it as the "socio-economic formation". And it produces this problem for me: if I have "economic" and I have "social", that means that the economic is not social. Because if I am clear that the economic is a social form, I would realize that when I am saying "economic-social" I am saying "social-social", and that makes no sense, I am contrasting them: on the one hand the social, on the other hand the economic, and the economic would not be social. I'm going to take the case of political economy, or economic theory in general, this is what he wants to tell me all the time: that economic relations are natural, and that they are not social. And if I listen to the speeches of the state bureaucracy, they are full of "socio-economic problems". Again: I am saying "social-social" or that the economic is not social.

But when I came across this it produced a by-product effect that I shouldn't have had, which was... (very shortly after because then the dictatorship came and those books disappeared from Argentine bookstores)... that Akal published in Argentina. And the edition of Siglo XXI compared to that of FCE is very expensive. Akal's was also expensive because of the structure of the volumes that makes publication more expensive. And I went to the bookstore, grabbed the prologue to chapter I and found the "socio-economic formation". I left it on the shelf and left indignantly. And then, it was never obtained again in Argentina, and now it is worth a fortune and the opportunity disappeared.

What role does "socio-economic training" play? At the time when this translation appears, along the lines of the Althusserians, of the Gramscians, the proposal had appeared that on the one hand there is the mode of production, and on the other the "social system". What was the mode of production? The economic. And in Latin America there was discussion about which mode of production there was: whether it was feudal or capitalist. The mode of production was reduced to the organization within each unit of production. And outwardly, the general unity was resolved by social formation. And what did social formation depend on? Of the will of the subjects. So that translation was accompanied by an element that appears in the first paragraph of the translation of Siglo XXI (I don't remember Akal's because I also read it but it was deleted), the one that I said, "In societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails...", in those translations it is written: "In societies where it *dominates* the capitalist mode of production", and the discussion that existed at that time is that there were dominant modes of production and subordinate modes of production. So using the term "dominant," which was a translation that is valid, the use of "dominates" was intended to serve this approach. It was to make what is called "social" independent of what is called "economic".

At that time there was a book by an author who I don't remember his name (I have a lot of problems with names, I remember he's an Italian) who says: in reality Marx never uses the expression "socio-economic formation", but we're going to use it because it's interesting to discuss it; and then from there it is as if Marx used it. So, I look at that and if Roces irons out the dialectic, the edition of Siglo XXI has intentions that serve this type of approach. When I grabbed the new edition of FCE,

I started reading and I said: well, Roces (who had died a long time ago, but after the Siglo XXI edition he redid his, made notes...) eliminates the "conceives" and is "looks", "faces"... And I say: how good. I continue reading and the "economic formation of society" disappeared and "the economic-social formation" appeared. So, there I have Roces in its 2nd edition, but I still use the old one. In Sacristán's there is "economic formation of society", also in Fazio's. In Akal's I don't remember. So, one faces these problems. If the reading were intended to interpret the text, this would be a serious problem. But since the purpose of reading is not to interpret the text, but to confront the real concrete and ask oneself whether what one has read in the text is recognized in what is in front of him, the difficulty is going to be what I am proposing: it cannot be that I say "conceive". Until he ends up finding the answer. It hinders, but one cannot blame the translator if one later says that he misinterpreted the text.

And I'm going to make another reference to Volume 3, which, as everyone knows, was edited by Engels, and Marx said to him: "Do something with this so that it can be published." And Engels devoted the rest of his life to doing that and publishing it. And beyond the differences that I may have with Engels, the work he did is admirable. Now a new edition of the original German of the draft has been made, and then the precious people appear who say that Engels falsified Marx, changed things, that Engels clarifies that the things he put are in parentheses but there are things that he did not put in, and that this is not Marx's work, it is Engels', and I have even heard that you should not read that. I grabbed things when I had doubts and then they are in the original, it's not that Engels invented it. That certain people don't like it... The problem is that they don't like the phrase, not that he changed its place. Then the accusation appears that this is a draft and Engels made it appear as a finished work. If I am going to interpret the text, I may be confused if it was a draft and appears as a finished work. If I'm going to use it as a tool to confront the concrete movement of capital, I'm not going to have a problem, I'm going to say: this says this, do I see it or don't I see it in the real movement? If I see it, phenomenon, if I don't see it, I submit it to criticism and justification why I don't see it, and I take responsibility.

The synthesis of this is two issues: no translation is so bad as to make it impossible to move forward using the text as a tool, nor is any so good as to be trusted. So far we are talking about translations. In Argentina, but it circulated in general in Latin America, because it was the translation that was made in the USSR and then published in different countries, it was translated by Mazía[5], who had translated the French edition. And in the French edition Marx puts a prologue that today would be questioned whether it would be politically correct or not, because he says that since the French like to go quickly to the results, he simplified the exposition, as if to say that they cannot read the complexity of the original. But well, it was a translation that passed for being from the original German without being one and it circulated a lot at a time when in the case of Argentina the PC had a lot of presence, but I understand that it disappeared in general from the editions that are available.

[5] Marx, K. (1973), *Capital*, 3 vols., ed. by F. Mazía et al. Buenos Aires: Cartago.

The other issue is that the German reader today has the same problem that we have. It is filtered and complicated for us by the translator, but a German word today does not mean the same thing it did 150 years ago. It is also the problem of reading in the original. I don't read German. I've made some attempts at a course, today there are many tools to find ways (such as Google Translate), I've looked at the English edition, Italian edition... And if I have any doubts I consult someone who knows German. So, the thing that you have to read it in German because if you haven't read anything, it's a fantasy. And he refers to an issue that happened in Argentina in the 1970s, which was when Lacan's seminars began to be published. Then there began to be reading workshops on Lacan that were transformed into French workshops to be able to read Lacan; absolute nonsense. With the translations we have, we have a blunt weapon to move forward. And English translations are worse than Spanish translations, both old and new. That was basically what I wanted to raise [...].

§1. Commodity AND MONEY[6]

Chapter I. The Commodity

1. The two factors of the commodity: use-value and value (substance of value, magnitude of value)

In the last meeting, we had made a journey based on the question of what to do, about our own subjectivity, and we had very roughly displayed that in this process we are confronted with the commodity. What we are going to do now is look at it as it appears in the text, without making explicit the process of prior analysis, because it is not placed in the text.

Let's start with the first sentence that Marx puts in *Capital,* which is this (according to the different versions) of: "In societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails, wealth is presented as an 'immense accumulation of commodities' and the commodity as its *elementary form*." This point of departure is not an enunciation of concepts or principles from which it is going to start: it is the description of a concrete, which is placed with the appearance of being an immediate affirmation (it has no further development than this) in which, as to what relation there is between commodities and capital, the only thing one can say is that within the capitalist mode of production there are commodities and it appears as the expression of social wealth. Consequently, one can recognize Marx's expression of "I do not start from concepts, I start from the simplest concrete of today's society, which is the commodity."

First of all we have this starting point. If we look there, what we are going to find are several things to observe. Just as I said before that the commodity is simply in the capitalist mode of production, it is not explicit that the commodity is the product of something: it is simply something that is present within this society as an expression of wealth. We are going step by step because we are not going to interpret what the text says, what we are going to try to do is to reproduce for ourselves what Marx is confronting us with in the text. If we skip one of the steps, then we will find that we transformed this attempt to reproduce with our thought the determinations of our social being, it became a representation, and representations can only be interpreted, and each one can interpret what he wants. But interpretation is a knowledge that stopped at an appearance. And we are going to try not to stop at any appearance, so that each issue we face accounts for its determinations, its necessity. And then I'm going to advance something that came a little later.

When we take this starting point, it is an immediate concrete that presents itself to us, and the only thing we can do in the face of it is to do what Marx says: we are going to analyze the commodity. In this process of analysis, in the very expression

[6] All the titles of sections, chapters and sections are taken from the Siglo XXI edition of *Capital*, while the quotations are taken from the FCE edition as it is the one used by Juan Iñigo Carrera.

that the thing begins with the analysis of the commodity, what is confronting us is that it is not going to consist of separating what common attributes the commodity has, what is repeated and what is not in them, our question is: what is a commodity, what need, what potentialities does it contain? When we begin this process, what we have with respect to the commodity are these questions that I said before: we do not even know what a product is or what it is a product of: we only have its presence. We look at that initial expression and one could say: I look at societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails and I can see a lot of other things than that wealth has a form of an immense accumulation of commodities. What is it that is precisely allowing us to use the text (and that the intention of my presentation points in the same direction)?

One could take any concrete form within the capitalist mode of production and say: I am going to start the analysis from here. But this starting point is the product of a social knowledge that is available to us. This is the starting point that Marx found, he gave it an objectified expression in the text, and then we can make our path of knowledge, which can be more or less original depending on the degree of development that each one has made, as a process of recognition from the social point of view. So, instead of considering possible starting points, we have here a starting point, which, as I said, is placed in a way that is external to its own foundation. And consequently we are going to subject to criticism that process of social knowledge that we are using, because we are going to see if that starting point allows us to move forward when we face the concrete. I had said last time: it is not abstractly the reading of the text, it is facing wealth as it is presented in our society. And the other thing we're going to do is demand that this starting point account for its need. As a starting point his need is inexplicable, he cannot found his own need, what we are going to demand is that when we start on his base we can reach a point at which we say: that is why we needed to start from this point and not from another, or this was the most powerful to start [...].

The other point that I want to highlight in this is that this starting point puts us in front of the commodity in the capitalist mode of production. If the commodity has existed in other modes of production, if it can exist, if it was the same commodity or not, it is not present at this starting point. I summarize it by saying that the commodity is the product of a historical development, but here it is as a result and it is the commodity of the capitalist mode of production. Something that we have to take into account and see how far we can answer what that commodity is without looking at its historical development, whether we need to look at it or not will only be evidenced by the progress we are making. So we have this other question in front of us.

What is the first thing that will appear with respect to this specific commodity when the analysis begins? The commodity will appear as an external existence, an external object, but which has a potential determination, a quality as a power: it is a thing capable of satisfying human needs. It is the commodity that as an external object has this potentiality. And Marx is going to make the observation that no matter where these needs spring from, they can spring from the stomach or from fantasy: it is irrelevant. But they are needs that have human subjects present in the

capitalist mode of production. Here there is no display of where these needs arise from beyond the fact that they are human needs.

And Marx is going to make another observation about how the object satisfies these needs: it makes no difference whether they are needs for means of subsistence, objects that have the potential to serve immediately for the reproduction of a human body, of a human life, or whether they are as means of production, objects that are going to be used by human beings as means of production, to operate on the rest of nature and transform it. So what he has been looking at here is from the point of view of the objects. The observation that follows is: objects have different qualities, properties, and can be used in different ways. And it is a result of the development of the human life process what potentialities or qualities are recognized in the different objects. This changes in that process. And the quantity of each object, the quantitative expression of the quality that defines those objects that have the potential to satisfy human needs, are also the result of the development of the life of society.

With this posed from the point of view of the object, the next step that appears is: this has the potential to satisfy human needs. From the point of view of the human subject who is going to appropriate these potentialities of the object, they are the ones who convert it into a use value, something that serves to be used. And from now on, the analysis that follows to ask ourselves why these objects contain qualities will be looked at from the point of view of the human subjects who are going to appropriate the usefulness of the object. The following observation is: in order to appropriate the usefulness of the object, one must appropriate its materiality. A commodity whose materiality I cannot appropriate serves me as a use value. It depends on the character of the human need that satisfies that commodity, and on the materiality of the object, that there are different ways of appropriating it. But the condition for being able to dispose of use value is always the appropriation of the materiality of the commodity. If I don't eat and incorporate the food into my body, I can't appropriate the use value of the food. If I can't see a painting, I can't appropriate that materiality. If I can't hear music either. Marx is going to repeat this by saying that you can only appropriate use value by using it, by consuming those commodities.

So far he is looking at the commodity, he is describing. It is no longer an immediate observation, it is a description not simply with the eyes, but with the "eyes of thought", where all the time one wonders what this is, what attributes, potentialities it has, how the human subject appropriates them since the commodity is external. And what is going to appear now is an observation that does not follow exactly that same type of question about the commodity: it does not matter if it took a lot or little work to dispose of that use value, to produce it. This has nothing to do with use value. And there is a question that one can look at in this development and that is that many times in the exposition there is a counterpoint or a response to many things that can appear in classical economics (when it makes sense we stop at that). So he continues to advance and the synthesis he is going to make of this is: use values form the material content of wealth, and it does not matter in what society, what social form the organization of human life has: it is a natural condition of human life to be able to appropriate use

values that allow a human body to be reproduced, be used to produce other use values. So, it was in the analysis of the commodity that one found the condition of use value, now what appears is: from the point of view of use value, this transcends the commodity. We find it in the commodity, but it is not an attribute that is exclusively proper to the commodity. And so we leave the capitalist mode of production in this sense because we are looking at a general condition. But just as we came out, what Marx is going to do immediately is to put specificity back in.

He is going to make the observation that in the type of society we are going to study, use values are the material support of exchange value. And back here this reference corresponds to the capitalist mode of production. If in other forms of society use values were also carriers of exchange value, that is not what one is looking at. What one is looking at in this process of recognition is what these exchange values are in the capitalist mode of production. And the reference is, again: if use-value is that it serves to use, exchange-value is that it serves to exchange: they are exchangeable objects, it has no more content to say that these use-values carry exchange value. Since it is not a development of concepts but rather looking at that object in front of you, wondering about the determinations it carries, the only thing you know about exchange value at this point is that it serves to change.

I am going to disregard my own proposal. I am used to a structure where discussions, questions, interventions appear... And suddenly I was seized by desperation because I am advancing and advancing, and at this speed I am afraid that there will be arguments along the way. Because now, in reality, the analysis of the commodity is over here: we discover that it is a use value and that it carries exchange value. Now we are going to start asking ourselves about the exchange value, and it may be that a lot of things have been left in between. In any case, Marx states that the commodity is an object that serves to satisfy human needs, a useful thing, and in other writings he focuses on a type of commodity, which is what corresponds to an object as an object, I don't know if it is understood. When one looks at use-values, what one finds is that there are use-values whose possibility of consumption only takes place once that use-value has an already finished existence, the process from which it arises (no matter the nature of the process) and the moment in which it can be appropriated are separated. consume. And there are use values that can only be consumed *as they are produced*.

Let's suppose that what I am doing here has use value, it can only be consumed as I am making the exhibition. When one says "thing", in reality the thing has an existence as an object, objectified, external to my person: my thought is objectified in what I am saying and is separate from my person, the product of my thought process can be appropriated independently of the appropriation of my person. Marx in one of the drafts looks at this 2nd type of use value, he looks at different forms and what presence they have in the capitalist mode of production at the time, under what forms this type of use value is produced, and except for transport (and in particular that of passengers) he will consider it as not very relevant. So the exhibition has very much the form that use value is a material existence finished before one can appropriate it.
Why do I put this clarification at the outset?

Political economy has tended to separate these two forms of use-value by calling the first type "useful commodities/things" and the second type "services". Marx gets very angry (apart from the two types of use value in the capitalist mode of production they are carriers of exchange value in what we have seen so far, they are forms of commodity), he also mocks the term "services". But especially, the contrast that political economy makes, one refers to the form that wealth has in the capitalist mode of production, and the other has no other condition than to be a use value, if I say "service" I took away the specificity. So, they are two forms of use value whose generation as use value, one is separate from consumption and the other is inseparable from consumption. I told them that we have an advantage over the mode of production that Marx looked at because what was barely incipient in the nineteenth century is now fully developed. And then there are references to "medical services", "teaching services", which are not the axis of social production, but the type of commodity that is finished. So a whole series of proposals have appeared about the fact that in today's society, this type of production that appears under the name of "services", now occupies a central place in social production (beyond what weight they actually have or not).

And another question arises that is linked to this, because in the draft – later published in the *Critical History of the Theories of Surplus Value* – Marx takes two quotations, one I don't remember who he is, the other from J. Stuart Mill, and both refer to what they call "services" as "immaterial labour". And Marx in one of the paragraphs of the text uses the term "immaterial labor" and never uses it again. Why do I want to emphasize it? Because since now there have been strong proposals about immaterial labor, referring basically to the production of information systems, programming and networks and so on, and personal attention, the care of people who cannot fend for themselves (which in reality Marx when he looks at it speaks of lackeys), there are proposals that Marx used the term "immaterial labor" but that he did not look at it, and the development it makes is invalid. What I want to observe in this regard is that there is no immaterial labor (I jumped to work, I should have waited longer...), there is no immaterial process: every productive process is of a material nature and its product is material.

If I look at scientific development, about which Marx will make an observation much later that one can consider extremely rich (if I remember correctly, in Volume 3, so it will take us four years to get there), all "manual" work contains an "intellectual", mental work, which is the organization of that manual work, and all "intellectual" work, its product has a material form, because otherwise it would be inside the body of the person who made it, but there is no product towards the process of social life. What I wanted to make clear is that we have these two forms of use value with respect to how it is generated (it does not matter if it is a natural process or a human process that generates it), and with respect to the materiality of every production process and every product of that process. It has an objectified existence external to the process itself. So, every appropriation of use value is a material appropriation, and this is what Marx remarked with respect to the appropriation of the materiality of the commodity so that use value can be realized.

JIC: [7]In the programming we had, the idea was an hour of interventions. Let's see if we can dedicate half an hour to this part. I am going to have to read the questions and I am going to take it, and I know that there are things that are going to remain unanswered and others that are going to awaken more need to intervene.

Javier [Chat]: In this first phase, I am intrigued by the importance or not of the expression "it is presented": does that mean that it is an appearance, as if it were the result of a superficial look, or is it a way of expressing that capitalism is indeed an enormous accumulation of commodities?

JIC: I didn't raise it because I said I was going to move forward with the content, but I referred to them last time I participated in a workshop on Capital many years ago, in the early 1970s. And the workshop started, and several meetings were stopped on the first paragraph and the discussion reached an absurd level (it was recorded for the rest of my life)... It was that in FCE's version, Roces translates as "An immense arsenal of commodities", and a discussion began about whether this was a subliminal message regarding the armed struggle. And there was also a long discussion about whether accumulation or accumulation, which meant a movement and what a static situation. He clarified that after that the workshop did not go very far. The question Javier asked has a different character.

I'm going to refer it to the way I was presenting it: it's put forward as if it were an immediate observation that has no more "depth" with respect to what it's saying than to say that what you're looking at appears like this, whether it's so or not, so far... What is it that it's an immense accumulation of commodities? This is what one has to answer by analyzing the commodity until one discovers its determinations as use-value carrying exchange value and seeing where this leads. Here one could not answer it because that is a demonstration. Whether this is the relevant manifestation or not, because one could say that it presents this and presents a hundred thousand different things, I could say... What do I know, about anything, which is the form that social wealth presents in the capitalist mode of production. I am going to say something nonsense intentionally: there are those who could say "an immense accumulation of intellectual capital", what they call "social capital", human capacities. It presents itself as a world full of human beings, and this is wealth. But so far all that can be said is this, let's see how far this goes and if it was appearance or not.

The next question [Chat] says: "I have the same intrigue because he could say 'wealth is' and opted for 'wealth presents itself', which seems to me to suggest that wealth in the capitalist mode of production is elsewhere and not in the accumulation of commodities." If someone said "wealth is..." At that point, what I would be expressing is a concept, and I would be starting from a concept: I already know what wealth is in the capitalist mode of production. And that would end the starting point of development. Because if I already know what wealth is in the capitalist mode of production, I don't have the need to ask myself what a

[7] Juan Iñigo Carrera. As can be seen, in case of participation of the workshop attendees, I mark their interventions with their names in bold.

commodity is, I already know what it is beyond the appearance it presents. At this starting point what there is is presented as the starting point of all knowledge of this character that is going to be developed here, I am going to give it the name of the dialectical reproduction of the concrete, but in reality all knowledge starts from the observation of an immediate concrete. From that observation is that one begins to wonder about the need. I am not going to raise the difference between the two ways of asking about necessity. And when you answered yourself, you discovered the simplest expression of that need, what you do is try to return to the concrete you had at the starting point.

Obviously, immediate observation requires names, one has to name those things, and from those names (which are not concepts of things) one can construct concepts or one can ask oneself why these things in front of you contain necessity, what potentialities. The commodity contains the potentiality to satisfy human needs and from the point of view of the human subject this makes it a use value. And we saw the attributes, the qualities of use value: it is a use value because there is a human subject who recognizes it as such for himself (so far we do not know why, the same thing for one is a use value and for another it is not). On the first sentence, this is how Adam Smith begins, and it is not a phenomenological vision: all human knowledge begins with immediate observation. So it may or may not be, let's see where it leads.

Javier: How can a melody end up being a commodity?

JIC: If you want to listen to music, or you have to buy the medium on which the music is or you have to pay a ticket to listen to it live: it is a commodity and it is part of the immense arsenal. With paintings you can see it immediately: I don't know why, but there are paintings that carry an immense exchange value. They are worth millions of dollars. That means that they serve to exchange, and with what is received in exchange you can have an enormous amount of other commodities. We do not yet know what the commodity is the product of, but every objectified existence, every useful thing in the capitalist mode of production, appears to be within this immense accumulation of commodities. Once I had a strange intervention because there was someone who said to me: how is music, art, a use value? And I say: have you never listened to music or looked at a painting?

[...] Here [in the chat] there is a material description of the nature of the appropriation of the use value of the painting, but be careful because this is not simply... Well, it's the process in its pure materiality. Because we had: "springs from fantasy", and then appropriating the use value of the painting may not simply be that photons impact my eyes or sound waves impact my ears, but that for me it has a certain use value that springs not from my stomach (except for some music that can give me stomach pain, but I don't want to listen to that), but it is what Marx refers to that it springs from fantasy: I do not have an ocular need to perceive photons, what I have is a need to consume *what* the music or the painting tells me. For which I have to be able to hear it, to see the painting, if not, I cannot appropriate it. If I can't see it, it may be that I can appropriate it orally or through a text because someone tells me what it means, and then I'm appropriating it in the form of *that* materiality. If someone appropriates the use value of something, he

consumed. Maybe something that was for me, but cannot consume for me, if I do not have the possibility of appropriating the materiality of the object I cannot consume it.

Alejandro [Chat]: If it is clear that so far we are advancing on the commodity in the capitalist mode of production, how do we address its specificity with respect to other modes of production? I understand that Marx is accused on the one hand of making a logical development and on the other hand a historical one.

JIC: We will ask ourselves about other modes of production. I leave the form of exposition of the text. The problem we had was "What to do?", and it is a "what to do" in the capitalist mode of production. So, I need to answer myself about what the commodity is, because that commodity is within my "what to do", it encloses it as a necessity. And well [regarding logical/historical development], I'm not going to give a name to what we're doing. What we began to do was an analytical process that was not based on looking at what things are repeated or not: it was based on answering us about the potentialities that the commodity has, looking not at the cluster but looking at what *the* commodity is. History is as a result. In the question about use value that led us now to face exchange value, we never used a logic. We did not say: if we have this and we have this, then the constructive relationship that we have to apply is this other. We were looking at one thing, and that led us to look at other things: there was neither logical development nor historical development. But it is a statement that has to be founded on development.

Carlos: Marx at the beginning of *Capital* only wants to point out that he wants to start from the first thing one sees, but he wants to make a whole development to show how true that first glance is.

JIC: Let's see what it is deploying. One can say: it is clear that it was not an outbreak of enlightenment that made Marx say: "I am going to start this way." It is the product of a long development that made Marx in which he advanced and subjected to criticism the same thing he found until he found for his exposition what he considered the most "finished" starting point. Because he used this text in the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in the 1st edition of Chapter I, and in the 2nd, and then in the *Marginal Notes to Wagner* he makes this observation: the starting point is the commodity.

Ignacio: What is an attribute?

JIC: It's a quality that has something. When one says, "It is a quality that one has...", what one is referring to is not simply the features that one presents in one's present existence, but at the same time it is what powers this thing, this being that one has in front of him, contains in his present existence. Being a use-value is an attribute that the thing has and that I am recognizing in the thing: that it has the potential to satisfy a certain need of mine.

Xatan: It is argued that they [the paintings] are not reproducible, which is why they have a lot of value.

JIC: I don't know[8] why things have a lot or little exchange value, the only thing I know is that in this society use values are carriers of exchange value. So I cannot answer.

[They ask about Aristotle's influence: matter and form, use value and exchange value...] We do not yet know what exchange value is. Whether or not Marx was influenced by Aristotle, the only one who knew what relationship his production had with Aristotle's was Marx. What I am going to propose is the same thing that I had proposed at the beginning: knowledge is carried in each person who knows, but it does not spring abstractly from the person who knows, it is the product of a development made by other individuals. That is what I meant when I spoke of a process of recognition. It is clear that Marx did so with respect to Aristotle's developments. He subjected it to criticism in chapter I, but the question is: why does Aristotle say what he says, what need does he carry in his person to reach the conclusion he reaches in front of the concrete he is looking at? Marx does not look at Aristotle's concrete: he looks at his own concrete, the commodity that is in front of him at the moment when he is reducing his process of recognition, which in that sense is a process of original knowledge: he is confronting the commodity armed with the product of what Aristotle did before, just as we are armed with that of what Marx did.

Ignacio: When you say that an attribute is a potentiality, that potentiality can also be productive, right?

JIC: It is a power that is to be realized. So it can have different qualities. Things have potentialities to be realized. If an object did not have a certain potentiality... At one time I did it with chalk, the example (and then it began to be problematic because I couldn't break the chalk): if the chalk didn't have the potential to be broken by the force of my fingers making that movement, I could *never* break it. In the iron bar there is no that potentiality, it does not have the attribute of being breakable by my hands, chalk does. And then I can appropriate this attribute because in the materiality of chalk there is the attribute of a certain resistance to torsion, and in the iron body there is another resistance to torsion.

Liz[9] [Chat]: What is the philosophical origin of the search for the need and power on the path of observation of an immediate concrete for the dialectical reproduction of knowledge?

JIC: When we asked ourselves last time what we were going to do, we said: the problem we have is what to do. It's not a philosophical problem, it's a problem I have all the time. I look at myself and don't ask myself philosophically what I'm going to do. It is a problem of the reproduction of my existence, in this sense: what am I materially in the simplest determination? I am a subject. Why am I a subject? Because I need to spend my body to appropriate the environment and reproduce my body. This is the simplest determination that human life has. I don't sit down

[8] We do not know them until the moment of development in which we find ourselves. It is part of JIC's refusal to advance things by skipping mediations that are about to be deployed.

[9] If I have not captured it wrong, then the chat of the first 2 sessions was not recorded and this participant does not appear again.

and think about why I have the urge to do. The problem I face is that I need to spend my body to reproduce myself, and I do it all the time: when I breathe, I spend my body to appropriate the medium, incorporate it into my body and reproduce myself. When I ask myself what to do, I am organizing how I am going to spend my body, so that this expenditure does not involve the destruction of my body. I know that I have to spend it, but since the objective of that expenditure is to reproduce one's own body, I have to govern that expenditure. And knowledge, the answer to what I do, is the question of how I organize my action, it is not a philosophical question: it is practical. If I stopped asking myself what I do, I wouldn't spend my body to reproduce anymore but I would continue to spend it, and the result would be that I would spend it, I would not reproduce and I would die. When one looks at the process of human life, what is before one in its simplest determination is this.

Many years ago someone asked me: you have a compulsion to act. I don't have it: I can't choose not to act. I can choose different forms of action. And I'm going to take a reference to something that I don't think I mentioned last time and that makes the critique of philosophical interpretation. It is thesis 11 on Feuerbach (1845): "Philosophers have done nothing but *interpret* the world in different ways; what is involved is to *change it*." And if one looks at knowing as the way to organize action, the problem with philosophers is not that they knew and did not act: it is that they knew under a form that is interpretation and they acted in the way that corresponds to that knowledge, and that knowledge does not allow the world to be changed. It is a matter of practice because knowledge is a moment of practice (this came much later, but hey).

When one is knowing, thinking, one has to expend one's body: one is already acting, wearing out one's body. But when one looks at the immediate objective of that expense, it is a *limited expenditure* of the body that has the purpose of appropriating the potentiality that one has as a subject with respect to the potentiality offered by the environment. Is that a means that will allow me to realize my potentialities (a means for me) or is it a means alien to me? When I recognize that this is a means on which I am going to act, I fully discharge my action, I make the *full* expenditure of the body (but I have already begun to spend it). And since I am transforming myself (because I am wasting myself) and the object/medium on which I am acting, all the time I need to reknow the potentialities of my subjectivity and those of the environment. Thus knowledge accompanies *the whole* development of action: it is the process of organizing action.

We live in the capitalist mode of production, where knowledge, even in its most powerful form, is presented separately from action: on the one hand theory, on the other hand practice, and that there must be an "interrelation" between the two. And what is the form of interrelation always remains in an undefined ambiguity. Why is it that in the society in which we live this is what is carried in the general consciousness, but especially in the consciousness that proposes a knowledge...? I leave it cut there because we would have to enter into other things that do not correspond. But this appears separate: why is knowledge not recognized as the organization of action? Why is it that when you look at Marx's thesis on Feuerbach,

what you read in general is that the reproach to philosophers is that they did not act after interpreting? [...]. This is something that is going to reappear all the time and that is why I wanted to go beyond what I had set as a limit, it seemed essential to consider.

[...]

I am going to take Catherine's question about domestic work. We are not yet done looking at the attributes of use value. Here the exchange value appeared, we are going to try to answer ourselves about the exchange value. Marx continues to look at attributes of use-value that are proper to the commodity. Now, we do not know what the source of exchange value is. We looked at commodities, we know that they are use-values, and we said that it doesn't matter if it costs a lot or a little labor, we didn't even look at how labor operates in the production of use-values. Labor is not a use value in the simplest determination we are looking at here. Ultimately, it is an action that produces use-values (if we were to look simply at use-value). Labor intervenes in its production. What generates exchange value? So far we have not faced it in the development that we have been doing. So, that is an observation that we cannot answer so far: it is a debt that we have, at some point we are going to have to face what produces use value and what we know so far as exchange value, and we will see there.

[...]

[II]

Regarding what is in the chat[10]: so far we only look at the use value. But it is the use value of things that are commodities. We do not know why they are a commodity, but what we do have in front of us is something that our immediate knowledge (I am going to put it even in these terms from the point of view of the form of the exposition) "knows" that there is something called a commodity, and that social wealth appears in societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails as an immense accumulation of what is called "commodity". But we know nothing more about the commodities. When we start the analysis we begin to know what they are use values. We don't know why this is a use value and this is not. And that's as far as we go. Whatever the material form of your production process... I don't even want to use the term "production" because Marx observes that it doesn't matter whether it costs a lot or a little work. What we do know is that they are presented to us as commodities.

[...] We are going to take the references to political economy (that is, the critique of political economy) as Marx raises the need to look at them. And after we have completed the development that Marx has done, if there is agreement, we can look at a whole series of proposals that make the question of value, exchange value, use value and so on. If you like, we move on.

[10] It was not recorded.

We had arrived in the analysis at the use-value of commodities, and we had arrived at an observation that just as use-value is a condition for human life—and consequently the wealth of any society has the material form of a mass of use-values—Marx returns to the specificity of commodities by saying: In *this* society that we are looking at, use values are carriers of exchange value, and so the analysis is going to confront exchange value here. When Marx goes to look at it, he will see a relation of equality that occurs in exchange where a certain quantity of a commodity that has a certain use value is equalized in the exchange relation with a certain quantity of a different use value that nevertheless appears to be equalized. And, at the same time, he looks at the unfolding of all these possible exchange relations that a commodity can have with another multiplicity of commodities and what he says is: it seems that this is a relation that does not respond to the need for some ["relation"?[11]] that goes beyond what is manifested, beyond the immediacy of the relationship itself. That there is anything that determines the magnitude of the exchange value of a given quantity of a commodity seems impossible to recognize. But he is immediately going to take the next step.

I am going to look at a question before: when one looks at exchange value, what is in front of one is the possibility that a certain body of a commodity, a certain use value, in a certain quantity, transforms its materiality, goes beyond itself, transcends itself and is transformed into something that is materially different. without there being any material process that carries out this transformation. When the relationship appears (I am going to take the translation of FCE) [12]of the 10 rods of canvas and the frock coat, there are means of the same nature. Someone can say: what mediates in the transformation is that someone cut the 10 yards of canvas and made the frock coat. But you take any exchange relation and what you're going to find is that 10 yards of linen can't be transformed in any way into a plate of food, and yet in the exchange ratio, you can go in with the 10 yards of linen and come out with a plate of food, they have been transformed without anyone having operated on their materiality, how do you explain that this transformation can occur? What Marx is going to propose after making this deployment by saying that it seems that it cannot have a content, a determination that gives some substance to that exchange value, what he is going to look at is something that has this elementary basis: exchange value is a quantitative relation, and for there to be such a relationship it is necessary that at the two poles of the relation there be the same quality, and in this case, as it is a quantitative relationship of equality, they have to be in the same quantity. And this is going to be a substantial step for the development that follows. What forces one to ask what they have in common is not that one is arbitrarily looking to see what they have in common [...]. What is that quality?

I am going to take the same course as Marx is going to present it and then I am going to propose to you to return to this. He says: they have to have a common attribute. It is not that he is looking for what is repeated, but that he says that qualitatively in some aspect they are indistinguishable. And the step that Marx is going to take is going to be to say: if we abstracted from use value, this cannot be a

[11] Unintelligible.
[12] Fondo de Cultura Económica.

physical, chemical, material property. Because just as we are looking at two use-values that cannot be equal in themselves, because materially they are different things, and therefore the common quality cannot be expressed in their material difference, what he is going to propose is: well, then every visible natural difference between one and the other cannot be the common attribute. In the next step he says: if we disregard use-value, the only thing left for commodities as a common attribute is that they are products of labor. What work is it?

Before continuing, I would like to ask you a question. Because the statement of: well, if we abstract from use value and from all qualitative differences, and then comes the statement that the only attribute left to it is to be the product of labor... It takes a step that one can stop to look at because it appears as if it were a simple immediate affirmation. And criticisms of Marx's development appear: one will abstract from use value but many qualities remain to the commodity, why go directly to what is the product of labor? What I am going to propose is what I find in this development.

When one finds that here is a thing that has an attribute, the question that arises from this observation is: where did the attribute get the thing? What was the action that put the attribute in the thing? And consequently, the question that underlies when one looks at exchange value and says that there must be a common attribute here, is with respect to what action put the exchange value into commodities. This action must have this double character, that it does different things as use-value and does the same things as exchange-value. Marx is going to leave that to present it later (the why, only Marx could answer), but seeing what happens with Marx's development and the reduction of work to a state and not to an action, something that appears in a series of discussions, and the image that we are now seeing what is repeated and what is not... The problem is that when you present it immediately, you are wondering about an action, and when you look at what happens to the *natural attributes* of commodities... And there are natural actions that operate in the transformation of a thing into a use value, but what one has in front of you is that this action cannot give a common quality to the universe of those products that can be expressed through a completely unnatural relationship such as exchange, in what I was proposing before. Here there is a transformation of the materiality of the object that is completely unnatural.

So, natural actions are present each in its concrete form to transform things (let's put it that way) into use value, but they can never have the attribute of transforming a thing into an exchange value. It is not simply because one says: we abstracted from use value and then material qualities disappeared. We are looking at what action is capable of putting a quality that is expressed in the exchange relationship, and natural actions are not. And when the statement appears that the only quality he has left is to be the product of work, it also appears as an external affirmation. And if one is looking for an action, if it is not a natural action, the other action that intervenes in making things use values is human labor. And then he comes to the same point, but not with an outward affirmation. Later this will appear. But in a world where the form of scientific thought is based on the idea that analysis is looking at what is repeated—and here what we are saying is: analysis is looking at what is the action that puts the quality, not what is

repeated—the exposition, immediately put as if it were: "This is the quality," lends itself to the inversion of saying: Here there is an external process, and it is invalidated because we put 10 external processes in parallel and in each one the possibility of finding a common attribute appears.

When Marx goes on, what he is going to propose is: well, but if there is no use value, it cannot be a work that is qualitatively different, it has to be a work that carries, under all the concrete forms in which it materializes, the same quality. And then what he is going to propose is: it is human labor *abstracted* from its concrete forms, what he is going to call abstract human labor, and what he is going to say is: what is manifested in this equality that exists in the exchange relation is that in the two commodities there is the same materialization of this productive expenditure of the human body regardless of what concrete form it is given to it. has given to that expense. And here he is going to take the step to say: this is the common substance, a *social attribute* because the transformation in the exchange relation has no material character, and then from now on, what we have in front of us is the value of commodities: it is no longer the phenomenon of exchange, it is now the attribute that makes commodities exchangeable objects.

I make an observation that also has to do with proposals that are made later and with the reference I made last time to how development is evolving; how if a development made by the author appears and has a contrast, it says something different, to vindicate the oldest text is to suppose that the author is in a process of involution with respect to his capacity to know. And one of the manifestations of Marx's advance is that in the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* he does not finish differentiating between exchange value and value. And here what appears is a sharp differentiation: until now we were looking at the phenomenon, the appearance, and now the attribute that takes shape in that appearance. And he is going to make it explicit by saying: we are going to leave that demonstration behind to ask ourselves about this content.

Marx is going to ask what this substance is. One discovered it from the expression of its magnitude. The question is what determines the magnitude of the value. If value is this objectification of human labor, whatever the concrete form in which it has been performed, then the measure of magnitude is the quantity of labor. And here is going to appear a marginal observation but one that makes sense. The magnitude of work is measured by the time of work, and in reality this is a measure external to work. Many measurement structures are external to their object. That is why determinations are going to appear that... The magnitude of work is already present, but when one measures it by time it escapes that this magnitude had a certain quality. When we look at the intensity of the work, we will see this question: since I am measuring it externally, I cannot directly measure the magnitude it has.

Alejandro: Juan, is there a way to measure the productive expenditure of the human body that is proper to it and not by time?

JIC: In the concrete movement of the measurement of work, what was developed in the historical process is the measurement by time. Not for

measurement... for which it would be necessary to plug in an individual a device that measures how much human energy, how much of his body he spent. One might think that abstractly there may be ways to measure the bodily expenditure that an individual makes working... And it's going to be shortened by time anyway. One could say: well, to do this, it doesn't matter the time: he spent so much energy. But in concrete movement what appears is the measurement of labor by time. And since that measurement is external, you have to take into account the variations that exist in the work. Let me advance it: in essence what there are are differences in intensity. It is not that time is external, it is the measurement made by time with respect to the expenditure of labor. Time is a quantitative determination that has a certain quality and every concrete form of matter carries it. But the measurement, the reference that is made is external.

Marx is going to stop at the fact that immediately, in what he looked at – abstract labor – there is still a qualitative difference. And that difference arises from differences in the productive capacity of labor, in the productivity of labor. And above all, the productivity of labor is related to the technique used to produce. Differences in productivity appear that have to do with the greater or lesser skill that exists between one individual and another, but what will appear as central is a difference in the conditions in which each individual applies his or her work. The example that Marx is going to take is that of the manual weaver who takes much longer to produce the same amount of fabric as a weaver with a machine.

When you look at it in terms of body consumption (if you work longer, you consume your body more), what you are going to face in this question is how it is erased. If there is a relation of equality, and this is the substance which encloses the relation of equality, then it means that this qualitative difference which comes from the productive power of labour must be erased. What Marx is going to look at is as if all the work of society were a labor organ and that total mass is the sum of a set of individual labors. And that a total amount of work was applied there. But how is it going to be recognized?

He is going to make that expression that the lazier the guy who works the longer it will take, and then he will be recognized in exchange that his commodity holds more value than another simply because he worked more inefficiently or with less attention. And with respect to the determination of this work that has so far been devoid of quality with respect to its concrete form, but which still has a qualitative difference with respect to what is the quantity of labor that is expressed in the exchange relation, what Marx is going to propose is: what governs in a process in which *no one* has the power to say with what productivity of labor, with what productive technique one must produce, what is going to appear as an equalizer is normality, what is normal, and it is what Marx is going to call socially necessary labor time, which corresponds to normality.

Normality has as its simplest expression the average. Those who are above normal because they started a job with a larger productive force are going to find themselves benefiting from those who produced the same commodity with a lower productivity, because the former will have put in more abstract labor than the latter to make the production. And if in the exchange relation what we are seeing is

an equalization between quantities of labor, what is going to appear is that in the average (and it has to do with the set that Marx is putting here), the set of those who produced a certain commodity are going to put a quantity of labor into the mass of commodity that they produced, and on average they will receive the product of an equal amount of work, but some will put in less and take more, and vice versa. And the one who takes the most does not take it by an abstract merit of his own: he is part merit of having a larger productive force, but part demerit of the others because he has it lower. So what we're going to have in front of us is this determination. Marx is going to look at it through that average in general. Sometimes I clarify why in some exhibition it will come up to me: many times I take normality as if it were the universal condition, to take the relationship in its purity and not have to look at what happens within normality and the differences that exist between those who on average do normality. When you have to look at what happens with the difference, then you have to look at what specifically happens with it.

Marx is going to make an observation in the analysis regarding the magnitude of the value of a commodity. This has an inverse relationship with the productivity of labor. The independent variable, so to speak, is the productivity of labor, the dependent variable is the value of commodities. If the productivity of the labor produced by a commodity rises, the value of each unit will fall because in each one there is a smaller amount of labor, and vice versa. But what one always has to keep in mind is that a certain amount of work (no matter if it operates with greater or lesser productivity) will always materialize in the same magnitude of value. So, if a certain quantity of labour was required to produce a certain commodity and the productivity of labour was doubled, the number of units produced in the same time as before was doubled, and in each unit there is half as much labour as before. But over the same total labour-time there is the same quantity of labour as before, and therefore the mass of use-values produced (not the units, but the total) contains the same magnitude of value as before. This is important to keep in mind because it will play a role in many movements that we will see throughout the development.

So I'm about to make a brake, but I want to close with this. Now I am going to refer to this synthesis that Marx is going to make, which are observations that have an external character. Up to this point he had been developing an analysis and now they are observations where he is going to compare things and he is going to say that a thing can be use value without being value, and this happens when it is not the product of work. He goes on to give classic examples of political economy: air, virgin land, natural grasslands, and wild forests. What one looked at and wondered about is something that has a quality that is the product of work. So, when he says that there are things that can be use value but are not the product of work, what he has is not a commodity, that's why we didn't see them when we started.

[...] If until now the socially necessary work was weaving by hand, and now a mechanical loom has been incorporated and, let us suppose, the productive power of labor has doubled and this becomes the normal condition, the work of manual weaving that produces in the same time half of the machine, ceases to be a socially necessary labor. What normality supposes is that this production can be sustained, and here what appears is the movement of normality. There is a time when the

mechanical loom appeared and the one that wove by hand is still in production, and then it happens that on average the one on the mechanical loom will find his work represented as if it were a greater amount of value and the one who makes the manual weaving will be smaller than what each of them actually materialized. But there will come a time when normality will move and the one who knitted by hand will have disappeared. And then socially necessary work will no longer include in its average one that is already disappeared; The condition is this: that it is still recognized as socially necessary. That is why to make the analyses I prefer to assume a unit that is universal within each production so as not to add: well, the productivity of labor doubled, but is the old productivity still normal or is it no longer so?

Ignacio: Can it be use value and not a commodity?

JIC: If it is not the product of labor, it cannot be a commodity, but there are things that are use values and that their attribute as use value is not mediated by the action of labor. But what characterizes wealth in the capitalist mode of production is this mass of commodities.

Javiera: Juan, in the examples you give, virgin land, prairies, etc., what we have is that they are use values without being value, since they are not products of human labor, but can they have an aptitude for change?

JIC: The answer so far is that this is inexplicable, we don't know where it gets its aptitude for change. Let's continue to ask ourselves about the commodities to see if at some point the answer appears.

[**Frequently asked questions regarding these questions**]

As long as a certain material form is outside the access of the human subject, it is not a use value, it is not useful to use because it cannot access it, to appropriate the materiality of the body that carries it. For each society there are different things that are use values. I take Marx's example of natural forests. When that use value, its production was not mediated by labor, it has no value. What gives value to the wood of that natural forest is the work of having cut it (and then everything that has been done on that wood). Then we are going to look (in 5 years) why natural forests have a price. But if we wanted to answer here we would take a leap: we do not know the qualities of this commodity-producing work, we do not know... all the things that we are going to see. Otherwise, we could very easily fall into the nets of neoclassical economics and say: "because they are useful and scarce". He has a very simple explanation of the value that would allow him to jump to that explanation [...].

Alejandro: Are there use values that are not products of labor? I have doubts about that statement.

JIC: Air is a use value and is not the product of a productive expenditure of human energy that is objectified externally to the subject who performs it.

Gabriel: In a few decades, with the development of the productive forces, I suppose there will be less work to do because technology will already have it covered. In that case, does the mass of value fall even if the production of commodities rises?

JIC: To look at the concrete determination, it is whether the total mass of labor fell or not. If the total mass of labour falls, the mass of value falls.

Ángeles: And education as a product of human labor, is it a commodity or not?

JIC: So far, it is the product of socially necessary human work. The educational process is an objectification of the productive expenditure of his body that the teacher makes, he has to speak, draw, do something that externalizes that expense. This externalization is appropriated by another individual and consumed as a use value. So, if the product of education has the attributes that are required to make a commodity, it is a commodity. But we are just looking at the attributes, we have to look at them all to get there.

Félix: Water comes from nature, oil exists thanks to dinosaurs, but when they are extracted, work is applied and they are sold, they are commodities.

JIC: Despite the dinosaurs, because... Poor dinosaurs, I don't think they had much intention of turning into oil. From the point of view of human labor, they appear as a condition that is external to the exercise of human labor, not its product. So, the oil in what we have so far is a commodity because there is work applied to extracting it.

[Answering a long intervention by Xatan] [...] When one produces use-values for oneself, these are not commodities, they are simple use-values. What Marx is going to propose is: "To produce commodities it is not enough to produce use values, but it is necessary to produce use values for others, social use values." And here what is going to appear is: when we talk about socially necessary labor, now social labor has a second aspect that has become evident: it is the work in which an individual productively spends his body so that another individual appropriates the use value that was produced. When one works for oneself, it is simply an individual job. Socially necessary labor from now on appears with this double determination: it is that which is done under normal conditions, but it is made for others, not to be consumed by the same person who did the work.

The remark regarding Engels' note, of the addition he makes, Engels says: "(And not only for others purely and simply. [...] To be a commodity, the product must pass into the hands of another, of the one who consumes it, *by means of an act of exchange*."[13] And so, what appears inverted in this clarification that Marx had not considered appropriate to make, is that now it is a commodity because it is exchanged, and the problem is that it is exchanged because it is a commodity. So, I am explaining the commodity by exchange. But the problem we had when we started is that we had to explain the exchange, and it was explained because

[13] Marx, K., *Capital* (1977: 8), Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

commodities have a common attribute that allows them to enter into the exchange. I have enormous respect for Engels' own work (I find the *Anti-Dühring* very stimulating), because Marx threw a mass of manuscripts in an infernal handwriting at him and said: "Do what you can to publish it", and he dedicated the rest of his life to making it a publishable text. Since today there are criticisms of Engels with respect to what he published, I vindicate him. Engels cut, ordered, filled in gaps and now there are the arguments that this text was not written by Marx but by Engels. The respect that one has for that individual is that one must subject him to criticism. And when he finds an expression that says... Well, this explanation reverses the determination, what he has to do is point it out, otherwise he would be disrespecting him. With this we conclude the first section of Marx's development in *Capital*.

Xatan: In this case, intentionality has preference over activity? That is, if I initially make a product without purposes for exchange but this product for practical purposes is exchanged socially, what should we understand that this product of labor is? A commodity or a product for personal consumption?

JIC: If I cook a plate of mustaches, it[14]'s not social labor, it's simply individual. And this is what we have so far. Later we will see more determinations of this work. I go to a restaurant and order a plate of mustaches identical to the one I make, and there it is a commodity. If I pick a basket of oranges and I'm going to eat them all, it's not a commodity, they don't need to enter the market. Why am I going to take them if I'm going to eat them myself? And this is all I know. So, in the section that follows, more qualitative determinations will appear. So far what we have is an abstract labor that is socially necessary in the double sense of being made for others and being so under normal conditions. The intentionality with which it occurs did not appear at any time in this. One would say: if something is brought to change, it is because there is an intention to change it. What we have is this: if I picked the oranges for myself and I eat them, it's not a Ts. And what goes to change is: one takes the product of one's labor to exchange it with the product of another's labor, one does not change with oneself.

Ignacio: What if I trade it with a friend?

JIC: I'm going to answer one part and I'm not going to answer another part: I don't change things with my friends, I don't expect them to give me anything in return. So far what I can say is that, I do not want to anticipate the development that follows because in the next section the answer will appear as to what happens if I work for a friend, if it is a commodity or not [...].

[**Recap**]

What we had proposed is that these use values are carriers of exchange value in the societies we were looking at, where the capitalist mode of production prevails. We were faced with the question of exchange value, which appeared above all as a quantitative relation of equality between two things that as use values are

[14] Macaroons.

qualitatively different, and led us to the conclusion that behind this manifestation in the relation of equality there must be a common attribute or quality, and that if this is also a relation of equality, it is in the same quantity and that quality must be manifested in this relationship. This does not seem to have to do with use-value: if we leave it aside, the attribute that remains is that it is the product of a labor in which all qualitative difference disappeared, and then it will appear: a labor is an expenditure of labor power (it is spent = it denies itself) whose only quality is the absence of specific quality (different from its concrete form): abstract labor. Up to this point it has no other determination displayed than the character of expenditure (which is in itself a quality), but at the same time it seems that, as an expense, its only quality is that it has no quality that differentiates it within itself.

We counterposed this form of exposition with an analysis asking why, if there is an attribute, what action that attribute puts in. Natural actions cannot put the social attribute that commodities have of equalizing themselves in an unnatural way. The second type of action is also natural, because it is the action of a subject that is an organ within nature, but that we find separate and confronted as a subject with the rest of nature, and what we had was human work. Following the analysis, a qualitative difference appeared within this abstract labor: that it depends on the productive capacity with which the work is carried out. In this movement that lacks an organization that directly governs the unity of this labor process, it appears that the only way in which the qualitative difference linked to the productivity of labor is erased is the form of normality. In this form the simplest expression will be the average of the amount of labor expended by the producers of a certain type of commodity with a given use value. Apart from the question of qualitative determination, this led us to quantitative determination. There is an inversely proportional relationship between the productivity of labor and the value of each unit of commodities. A certain quantity of labour always produces the same mass of value on condition that it is socially necessary labour. The higher the productivity, the greater the mass of use values, but in each unit there is less value, and vice versa.

Then another determination appeared that revealed the analysis regarding the condition of work as "socially necessary": that it is work that is done for another individual. The one who is going to appropriate the use value resulting from that labor is not the one who produced it. One can work for oneself and one can work for another. Social labor is not abstractly "work done in society" because all work is. The difference is that there are jobs that are simply individual because the one who productively spends his body is the same one who appropriates that use value and reproduces his body with that use value (to take it in simple terms), and social labor in which one individual spends his body productively and another appropriates the use value and reproduces *his* body. person, let's put it like this. There is also productivity in individual work. I can make a plate of noodles (gnocchi cannot be kneaded by machine) by hand. The productivity of the work is going to be much higher when I do it with a machine. That doesn't mean that my work doesn't mean it's individual. If I did it so that the noodles could be consumed by someone else, my work, which is a productive expense of my individuality, is a social labor, which serves another, is destined to be consumed by another *human being*.

2. Duality of labor represented in commodities.

We had reached this point. What we can say is that what allows commodities to enter into this relation of equality that is exchange is that they are the product of equal quantities of abstract (qualitatively undifferentiated) socially necessary labor. Here Marx asks: what is this Ta? What is its materiality? It is a work, which seems to be necessarily material, but it seems to have no materiality other than the absence of quality. Then he is going to start with the analysis and he is going to say: let's go back to the beginning. What we had is: the commodity has this double character: they are use values (they serve to be used) and exchange value (they serve to exchange). Moving forward, he will propose: it is not simply exchange value, it is value, and that the labor that generates value and that which generates use value do not have the same character: there is also a double character of commodity-producing labor that is going to manifest itself in this VU/V difference, and in turn with the fact that the commodity is use value and exchange value. Marx "caresses" himself here and states that he is the first to make this clear, and that this is key to understanding political economy, and he is going to stop at this question of the analysis of the double character of work.

For this analysis, he starts from a point at which he is looking at the exchange of commodities, but at the same time he is going to face not with changeability but with use value. He's going to look back at the exchange relation, this equality relation, and from the point of view of use values, what's at one pole is different from what's at another pole. What concrete forms or modalities does work have? If there are different use-values, it is because the labour which produced them is a concrete labour qualitatively different from each other. Here appears a mass of diverse use-values, which enter commodities in exchange relations, and when one looks at that mass (remember the immense accumulation), we see that they are products of different useful labors, and what appears here is the social division of labor. These things that come to change do so because social labor is divided. The social division of labor is a condition for commodity production, but commodity production is not a condition for the social division of labor. Here he left the capitalist mode of production, this observation led him to the process of social production, of human metabolism, in general. But he immediately goes on to make an observation that refers again to the specificity of commodities and the capitalist mode of production: only the products of private and independent labor *are related as* commodities. He adds: in a commodity-producing society, through this private realization of social labor, the concrete form of the social division of labor unfolds in this form of society, where the producers of commodities are independent producers of each other.

Here we can stop at what material attribute private labor, made by independent producers, has, or leave it that way and move on. Marx takes the second road. Why? You should have asked him at the time. I can think of a reason related to the deployment he is making, that when we move forward, we will be able to see it in

the text itself. What this approach gives rise to is the criticism that says: "What role does this private labor have? It's just a thing that's said like that..." And then the private nature of work is erased and disappears. And one finds texts that have about 50 pages that talk about value, the commodity, commodity-producing labor, and the private nature of labor never appears. This externality can give rise to this type of approach.

[Answering questions.]

The division of labor is not a product of commodity production. It is a condition for the production of commodities, but all human societies have had processes of division of labor without commodity production. The fact that producers are independent of each other implies that they will have no link with each other in the production process, and that consequently labor will be divided, each specializing in a particular form of labor or a limited number of concrete forms of labor.

On the question of which direction we are going to continue in our analysis, one has to take into account when one is advancing in this that in the analysis one is asking about the determination that the form one faced takes. And that it cannot be answered beyond what is confronted at this point in the purity of the simplest determination of commodity-producing labor. And that if this has extremely complex forms that seem to be the negation of that simpler form... One finds oneself with the problem that one has to say: either the simplest form is of no use to me, and then I am going to stay with the complex, developed one; And when I want to explain it, I will have is that when I begin to wonder about the need for the complex form developed, I will move forward and I will end up wondering about the simplest determination. Or I am going to say: I will stop at this appearance, and I will consider this question answered. So one has to face it from the simplest form with which it is presented, among other things, the private nature of work. That is why I am not going to use the path that Marx uses, but I propose that we stop at what is the private character of [social] work, what an independent producer is.

We look at the materiality of the labor process and one aspect of this is the way it is organized. When one finds oneself analyzing what a commodity is with the way in which commodity-producing labor is organized, it is that it is produced by—I will first take the term in the abstract—producers who are not directly linked to each other. This means that one is an independent producer, not linked to the other subjects of society, nor to the other producers or to the consumers of his product: he has the full organization of his individual labor as a producer. Up to this point I said "producer" in the abstract, the purity of full control over the producer's work corresponds to an individual producer. If I work, I am a producing subject; In a collective, if we producers are a collective, then I could not have full control over my individual work, because I have to combine it with the other members of the collective. If I ask myself what is the nature of the organization of this work, what I am asking myself is: it is a work that is done independently of others, the pure expression of which is a producer who has full control over his individual work.

The terms "independent" and "private", which seem to be redundant, have this meaning: the "*independent*" is the affirmation of the producer himself in his not being subject to any link with anyone in the organization of his work. "*Private*" refers to the fact that other individuals cannot intervene in the organization of their work. Each one in full control over his individual work has this double aspect: he organizes it independently of the others, and the others are deprived, excluded from participating in the organization of this individual's work. When one asks oneself what attribute there is in the materiality of commodity-producing labor, what one finds is how that labor is organized: privately and independently.

The private and independent organization is an individual producer who has full control over what concrete form he is going to give to the productive expenditure of his body, to his work: what he is going to produce, how, with what technique... This is all that one knows about that producer so far. It is clear that today this is not the general form of commodity production. Here we have this alternative: the concrete form seems to be the negation of this. What do we do? Do we go to the concrete form without having looked at privately and independently organized social labor in its purity? Or is this all we can say about private labor so far? What you have in front of you is social labor that has this way of organizing, and let's see where this movement takes us.

So far we wonder about the determinations of this work. Here there is an observation that Marx does not make explicit, which is raised in the first works he was doing until he discovered that the question was private labor. To have full control over individual labor you have to have private ownership over your own means of production, because if I share the means of production with another individual, I no longer have that full control, I have to combine with the other how we are going to use the common means of production. This is not explicit, but Marx was advancing in private property, and at a certain point he says: the problem is not private property, it is the private labor from which it springs, the private form that social labor has in the capitalist mode of production. So what we have here is the absolute purity of social labor done privately and independently, the simplest form of the private character of labor. Marx puts it as an observation external to the analysis he is making, he simply says: this is it, this condition of work intervenes here.

So, it is going to continue advancing and now it is going to look at how the product of labor that is already known is presented with this double condition of useful labor (a term widely used by Marx, I am going to use "concrete labor", but it means that it is work done in a form that is socially useful) and abstract labor, now carried out privately and independently. Marx states that there is always a part of the wealth provided by nature that human life has as a starting point, and material wealth depends on the concrete useful forms with which human labor takes forms from nature and converts them into use values. This work is useful, concrete, a condition for human life, and what is going to appear is an eternal condition for the reproduction of human life: human life is a process of metabolism, an organic exchange of the human being with nature. Again, what is going to appear with respect to this material wealth, but already seen under the specific social form of commodities, is that these are, in this sense, the product of nature *and* labor. And

what it will always say if one abstracts from human work, is that there is always a natural substrate. This has to do with a discussion, and a criticism of an approach by Adam Smith in which there is no natural substrate, everything is decomposed into forms that correspond to human work. In Volume 3 there is a critique of this approach. Material wealth is always the product of work and nature, and the human being, who is a being of nature, does the same as nature: he takes that natural matter and changes its form, transforms it. Looking at the question of use value and material wealth, what is going to happen is the determination of commodities as *values*.

What Marx discovers is that there is an immediate manifestation which is exchange value, which is that relation of equality between commodities. But he says: we must set aside this expression in order to make the analysis of commodities as carriers of this exchange-value. And what begins to appear is the value (Then he is going to return to the exchange value and he is going to make a series of observations). I have many reservations to say whether there is a *concept* of value or not. Marx speaks of such a concept, but at the same time Marx says: "I do not start from concepts", one does not start from the construction of concepts, so far there is not a single concept as a starting point, we did not say: "From the observation of a concrete we are going to separate these aspects from it and we are going to put it as the concept of this concrete".

We start from this immediate observation about how social wealth is presented in societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails and we begin to ask: What is a commodity? And the only thing we knew about it at that point is what is commonly known about it: it is a useful object. And we return to the point at which the concept of that utility can have a more vulgar or more scientific scope, it is deployed according to how far one is going to go with the thing. And we return to the immediate observation: well, in these societies, this is the bearer of exchange value. Vulgar knowledge says that exchange value is this relation of equality: I surrender this and transform what I had into something qualitatively different. And we said that in order to enter into that relationship there must be a common attribute, and we began to ask ourselves about that common attribute, we did not say: "The concept of value, then, is this." Natural? It does not appear as a natural attribute. What other action can the attribute put in? Human work.

And we do not propose a concept of "human work" either. And now we have the vulgar knowledge about human work, which then penetrates into that work and ceased to be a vulgar knowledge when Marx began to look and says: this is the first time that anyone realizes that work has this character. And that is not the product of an immediate observation, of a vulgar knowledge, but of a knowledge that wondered about the need for that action that put a certain quality. He says: well, if there is equality there can be no qualitative difference, so it has to be a work in which these differences have been erased, but there is a qualitative difference linked to the productivity of labor. How do you erase that difference? The question is not that to erase it you have to do *this*, but how can it be erased in a movement in which there is no direct regulation? The answer: as in all movements of this type, it appears to emerge from a lot of movements independent of each other, if it carries a determination, it will manifest itself as *normality*. It's not that there's a

concept put in it by saying, "It's normal work. What appears is: if I have this question in front of me, this has to have this determination resolved, which is resolved through normality. And then it continues. Nowhere is there a concept of "value."

Smith and Ricardo sometimes use the term value as a synonym for exchange value with absolute indifference. Marx still does so in the *Contribution*. And the term "value" appears without specificity with respect to the term "exchange value". In *Capital*, Marx fully marks the difference between the attribute of the commodity and the way in which this attribute manifests itself, between value and exchange value. The point here is that there is a method, and it is not the same method in which we are all trained. And the more scientific training we have, the more we are trained in that method, which is that of *logical representation*, which corresponds to a process in which one starts from concepts: one starts from an analysis that is not to ask what is the necessity that determines this, but what it says is: here there is no necessity that is not manifest; the only way to discover the necessity is to look at the manifestation, who expresses his need for repetition. If it is repeated always, this is a need that is present. The concept is constructed by saying: I take this that is always repeated, this other that is repeated, and that too, I put them together and I have the concept from which I will start later, returning to the concrete on which I have to operate.

In the development that we have been doing, we did not make it explicit, but we did not make an analysis of this type. We did not say that the only way to express necessity is manifestation, on the contrary: what we said when we looked at exchange value is that manifestation is inexplicable. What we have to ask ourselves is what is behind this manifestation, what is the content that is manifested in exchange value, where does this attribute come from that things that are apparently qualitatively different (what is repeated is that they are qualitatively different), can be put in a relationship of equality that implies a common quality. We did not say: "We are going to analyze like this," but what we did was analyze in a way that implies that we *did not* say from the outset: "the need manifests itself." On the contrary, what we are looking at is: necessity manifests itself differently in that concrete that we have in front of us. And what we were doing was continuing to ask ourselves why this object has a quality.

What we have here is an analysis, a question about the need that is being revealed. We don't have a conceptualization. Marx does not begin by saying: well, this is human work. What he begins by saying is: what I have in the capitalist mode of production and which catches my attention (so to speak, and which is put forward as an immediate observation, although it is obvious that it is not), is the commodity. So what is called "labor" in the capitalist mode of production? If in the etymological origin it departed from that, or the historical development of the term... It's not what's in question, it's not the problem I have. What I did was to take what is called work today as a general description that is valid for any mode of production. To know this, I don't need to look at the historical development of work, I only say: it is this expense, and this is a natural condition of past, present and future human life (although it lacks a part that I don't want to include here). If I want to put it historically, among the aspects that will appear to me is how

concrete labor, the production of means of production, evolved, but that does not answer what the commodity is. At the start, what we propose is: here the story is as a result, it is for its product. The capitalist mode of production comes from a historical process, but we are not looking at that process of genesis of the mode of production, but the mode of production.

Conceptual construction has this character: I construct concepts from which I am going to unfold the return to the concrete. And so far I have not found any point where I had to say: *this* is *this*. What was unfolding was a naming. What was first described as an expenditure of labor power abstracted from its useful forms, is a description that I do not want to put forward because Marx does not put it in this form. But I prefer to leave it for later. When you look at yourself and say, "What do I do when I work?" it describes what you do. And this is what Marx is deploying, but not from that description, but he was asking himself about the attribute that the commodity has, etc., and the differences between concrete/abstract labor appeared, and from there he will continue to advance. At some point Marx will use the term that something "fits" his concept, which he clarifies in the prologue: he flirts with Hegel's forms of expression (no one can say where he flirted or not, only Marx could say it, and he did not put it in the text). I can read this "conforming to his concept" in a way, I cannot say that this is what Marx thought, and it seems to me that it lends itself to confusion.

I take the "mode of production", and it's a name, I don't know what a mode of production is so far, I only know that it's a name, which is not a name of vulgar knowledge, but I look at it and what does it say? The way in which production is organized. That's what he says so far. I put it in other terms: in societies where production is organized under a form that we all call "capitalist", social wealth appears as an immense accumulation of what we all call "commodity": it has no more content than that at that point. I raised the experience with that workshop on *Capital* where there was a lot of discussion about this first sentence because it was seen as a succession of concepts, and it is not: it is an immediate observation (as it is posed) that does not say what a mode of production is, what capitalism is, the commodity ... So much does he not say what a commodity is, that when he finishes the sentence he says: well, then we have to answer what a commodity is, if the concept were already set there would be no need to ask him.

If I have to learn the method of logical representation, I have a body, not to say a *corpus*, which is the method of logical representation: I have to learn logic, I have to learn what a concept is and the links that logic establishes. I don't care what content the development is with, what matters to me is the structure, the coherence of logical necessity. So I have an object that I have to appropriate before I can fully develop the capacity for logical representation. It is clear that in concrete movement one does not learn it that way, but it corresponds to that development. Here we are seeing a method that does not have that external structure, that cannot be presented *a priori* because it can only be developed, deployed, starting from a concrete with respect to which one wants to answer for its determinations.

I think I planted it at a time when I started to give about 3 workshops on the dialectical method, and I felt more and more at odds with myself and ended up

expressing it in this irony: this is a knowledge that can only be appropriate if each one develops it for himself: *believe me* it is so. So it was: it is an objective knowledge that can only be deployed if each one does it for himself (no one can tell him how it is done). One of the problems with that is: well, it's the same as logical representation. If I believe in its principles, such as the principle of identity, I do believe that it has a consistency because I can apply it to a real determination. The principle of identity says: "Nothing can transcend itself, when it comes to its end, all that is beyond itself is itself, and therefore there can be no form that does not have a content that is not equal to its own form. And everyone knows – because this is part of common knowledge – that appearances can be deceiving, and that therefore it is not that a form cannot have a content that is not the same as the form. So in logic I have to believe, I have to accept its principles. And here there is no beginning to start." All this is part of what will later sprout in development.

[Xatan doubts that work is a condition for the reproduction of human life.] I am not projecting the organization of capitalist labor to all of history. On the contrary: I find something that is not common to previous social forms. What I do is: I look at myself, doing what I'm doing now, and I describe myself. I'm wasting my body, I can't do what I'm doing if I don't spend my body. In order to materialize that expenditure in a concrete form that is expected to be useful (or that is my intention), the concrete form is that I am speaking, expressing, giving objectified form to my thought. What is my purpose? To produce this exteriority to my person. To do that, I operate on the medium using the computer and transform that external environment to my person, which in this case are the ones that are going to consume what I am proposing. I don't have a concept, I'm describing what I'm doing.

This is what I am unfolding, and for that (Marx develops it later) that description I made has a form of organization, without referring to the mode of production but to the way in which I govern that productive expenditure of my body. We have already stated that knowledge is the organization of action, which is organizing itself because I have to spend my body to organize it, knowing what potentiality I have as a subject with respect to the potentiality that the environment presents to me. If I look at the incipient human being 2-3 million years ago, there is a difference in the form of that knowledge. Mine is a conscious knowledge, which knows that what it is doing is organizing the action. Before, it was simply an animal organization, which is transformed because the productive forces of labor are developed, the starting point is increasingly separated from the point of arrival in the process of metabolism. And so what's implicit in this reference to what I'm doing is that I do it by consciously and then voluntarily organizing it.

Marx stops at work, and what he looks at is something that is not just any human work in the development of the human being, because at the origin of the human being there are no conscience and will. When Marx looks at the work in Chapter V, the first thing he will notice is that one does something common to animals but organized in a conscious way. It is not that I am projecting a definition of work proper to the capitalist mode of production into the history of the development of human life. What I'm taking is a description. The spider

productively spends its body, gives that expenditure a specific useful form (making the web), appropriates the medium. Part of that environment is the product of his own previous labor, part is nature unmodified by his productive activity, and I have this very thing. Then I am going to reserve the term "work" for human productive activity, the properly human thing about that work is its conscious organization. I am not projecting or taking a concept of work, but describing something that has the general name of "work".

Each one has to advance where they think they are going to find something that will allow them to continue advancing. The worst thing that can be done is that because someone else says that you have to go one way, although you think that you should go the other way because there you hope to find an answer (or how to continue wondering), that is: then I'm going this way. This becomes an abstract process. What you never have to do is stop at that progress and say: well, I've already answered myself. Because concrete forms are always transforming, and one is always transforming oneself (organizing one's action, asking oneself about the potentialities one has as a subject in relation to those of the environment).

[...] The process of human life is a natural process, it is not separate from nature. When one looks at this process of life not from the point of view of the subject, but from that of the organic unity of nature, human life is a concrete form, an organ in its movement, of the process of existence of matter (to take it in very general terms). When one looks at it from the point of view of a subject (and this is true for human life and for the amoeba), the rest of nature is no longer simply that here there is a unity of the general movement and I am an organ of this. As a subject, one sees oneself as distinct from the rest of nature, which is the *environment* we appropriate. It is under discussion whether or not viruses have the status of living subject or not: the question is whether or not they spend their body, but they need to appropriate the environment to reproduce because that possibility is not in their own corporeality. Subjects *are only* the *living forms* of matter, the others are transformed, they have potentialities to realize, but when they realize them, they cease to be what they were, they are destroyed. Living subjects, when we do them, what we do is self-reproduce (this transcends individuality but I leave it at that).

In all the development we make, we are looking at a natural process whose *generic determination*... Every form of existence of the living subject, the individual organs of that living subject (individuals) are linked to each other in such a condition. Human beings do the same as other living subjects in terms of the simplest content. But these relations, this organization of the human life process, because of their generic difference from simply animal, vegetable, or whatever life... I am going to use the term social relations and *I am not going to talk about social relations between animals*, even if they are extremely complex, but *simply natural/animal*. I am going to consider it a naturalization to assume that there are social bonds between animal species – what there are are animal bonds – and to suppose that between human beings there are simply natural bonds, because they have concrete forms that are proper to human beings. It is not that social relations are not natural: they are a form of nature, but that they correspond to a subject that differs *generically* from all other forms of living existence [...].

[**Recap**]

A *concept* is an ideal or logical construction (based on logical principles) with respect to a concrete, which begins by accounting for *what* that concrete is. The contrast with the vulgar name of the thing is that it is said directly: the commodity is this, it has such a relation to this and to this. A concept of "commodity" would be to start directly from the fact that the commodity is a product of the SNALdPaI[15]. I am not facing the concrete, the object in front of me to ask myself what potentialities or what need it contains and ideally accompany it in the unfolding of that need, but I am enunciating it as something that is already "finished" from the outset. To say that the human being *is* a free individual is to start from a concept of the human being. When one looks at it in Ricardo's developments, the enunciation of the or that is part of concepts. He says, more or less: use value is a condition for there being exchange value, but it has nothing to do with the determination of exchange value. There is a statement of a starting point that I either have to accept as such or I have to reject it: I cannot ask myself what determinations use value has.

When we started, we are not even proposing that there is something called *value*. At the beginning we have only the immediate manifestation of the commodity in its exchange relation, and then we give a name to this manifestation: exchange-value = it serves to exchange. What we are discovering is what attributes, what potentialities the commodity has. The definition of the commodity will be at the end of development, which is when we will be able to synthesize all its determinations in the form of the definition. The concept is to start from the definition, from having defined something *a priori* as a statement that has an ideal character, a product of thought. Marx in the *Grundrisse* makes an observation to himself and says that his way of expounding must be corrected, because it seems to be the movement of concepts. In *Capital* we will often see that, as in chapter I, it begins with an immediate observation. [...].

The question is, why does it have that capacity? And the most general question: what is it that makes qualitatively different commodities changeable objects? The first thing one does is, "with the body," to encounter what appears to be an immense accumulation of commodities, but then it is, "with thought," to say: I find this within this object, and that in order to have this quality one must in turn have what I find that gives it that quality; And I ask myself again why this gives it this quality, what attributes it has to have to give it to it. And we have no answer to that for now. This cannot be put in a short text because this is opposed to what is the normal form of scientific knowledge in the capitalist mode of production, which starts from concepts. One enunciates the concepts there and then all the determination from which one will continue to flow is given. If one is going through the journey and is presenting to subjects who know that development, one can skip, one does not need to repeat the entire deployment, but if not, one has the problem, that it is an explanation that is extended so that it is not reduced to an enunciation of concepts.

[15] Abstract, socially necessary work done privately and independently.

[…] Where does the philosophy of the capitalist mode of production come from (which, moreover, the philosophy is proper to the commodity-producing society)? It starts from the concept that the human being is a free subject, and from there we begin to discuss what happens to his natural freedom; The question is not what a free subject is. If I look at it historically, the first thing I will have is that "free individuals" only exist from the production of commodities. In all social forms where the commodity was not the general social relation, and even in societies where the commodity already had a significant presence, there are no free individuals, they are societies of serfs and lords, slaves and masters, "primitive" communities, caste societies... So I cannot start from the fact that the human being is by nature a free individual, we should ask why he is presented to us as a free individual in this society in which I live and start from there, from what appears as the vulgar definition of "freedom": not to be tied to another individual, not to have a personal bond with another individual. I have no concept.

[…] When Marx returns to the determination of value, he will continue with a synthesis of the question of the concrete forms of wealth, he will make the reference to material wealth; He makes the clarification that apart from that which is immediately presented as a product of nature, [...] material wealth beyond its natural form, springs from a productive activity, from concrete ways of doing work. And what is going to appear is: well, useful work is a condition for human life and it is independent of the forms of society, because that is the way in which the human being carries out his process of metabolism in his condition as an organ of nature, but since it is a living organ it acts as a subject and that consequently what we are going to have in front of us is that the living subject he is going to spend his body to appropriate nature and reproduce himself. With this approach he will continue to advance and say: well, as material objects, in their materiality, commodities are the product of the combination of two elements: what nature supplies and human labor. No matter how much one wants to reduce material wealth to a simple product of human labor, this is impossible, there will always be a natural residue. I think that was as far as we had gone last time.

[II]

Now what appears with this transit is what happens to the other attribute that the commodity has, which is to be a *value*. Then he returns to the question of what this attribute of being an object can be changed because they are products, not of those concrete forms of labor, but of abstract labor. Here the material quality of abstract labor will immediately appear. One can say that the first time it appeared it was already like that because it was an expense. But now he says that it is a productive physiological expenditure of the human body (muscle, brain, etc.). Problem: Value is an attribute that is the opposite of a material attribute of the commodity. How is it possible that through a movement such as change, the materiality of the object is transformed without anyone touching that materiality? (Ex: 10 yards of canvas = 1 frock coat). When the rods transcended themselves, the one on the left became the one on the right, and there is still the same as before, there was no material transformation. Here there is a material expenditure of the

human body that gives the commodity an attribute that is completely "immaterial": the attribute of being a changeable object, a social attribute. But it is a material expenditure of the human body. So, the analysis has to continue advancing with respect to this material expenditure.

In what sense does abstract labor make this equality? In the two commodities, in the two poles of the relation between equivalents, the same material quantity of productive energy, of physiological expenditure of the human body, has been objectified. In the body of the producer of commodities before producing them there is an amount of energy that is latent, and when it was worked it was materialized/objectified in the product. If we look at socially necessary abstract labor—that is, labor done under normal conditions—measured by time, we see that the same quantity is objectified. Here a qualitative difference will appear with respect to simple abstract labor insofar as... If we look at human labor in its unity, we have that it is a productive expenditure of the body carried out under a concrete, useful and determined form. Here what appears is that abstract labor is going to have a quantitative expression, and in it the simple expenditure of labor power contains a qualitative difference between simple labor and complex labor. It is not just any TaSn: for there to be this homogeneity expressed in the relationship of equality, its producers must have spent the same amount of their bodies to have this production capacity. The work that counts here is the one that any average individual without special training can do, the individuals who do it are equal in everything. But there are jobs that require the one who is going to do it to spend more of his body to train himself and have the ability to do that work, in contrast to the work that the average individual can do. That additional expense is added to the work done immediately in the production of the commodity.

First he says that it is an "enhanced work", but he is going to correct himself and he is going to say "multiplied work". The difference is one of intensity/extent. On the side of extension there is more work done to be able to produce that commodity than is evident if one is looking immediately at the individual who is working. And this comes more or less from Smith; Ricardo stops to try to explain this difference and it appears to Marx as a qualitative difference that still exists if one looks at abstract labor in its general terms. If complex labor is a multiplicity of labors, then this in concrete motion counts as a sum of simple labors. The work that was done to develop this ability to work was also at the time a simple normal expense that must be added to the simple work that is being done in immediate production.

We shall return to this later when we have seen the development of the determination of value, for there one can answer the necessity of why in this form of society the labour which the individual does to produce himself, if it is normal, does not enter into the value of commodities, and if it is abnormal, Yes. So far we lack the unity of the movement, and for now it would remain as an external affirmation.

[...] Then, this thing of enhanced or multiplied work (depending on the translation) appears. In concrete movement, this qualitative difference—because there may be different degrees of potentiation with respect to simple labor—is

resolved, just as normality is resolved in the movement of commodity exchange. And Marx is going to present for the first time what is an assumption in development that contrasts with those proposals that start from assumptions. Here we find a *quantitative determination* that is abstract labor with different degrees of simplicity/complexity. This differentiation is always present in Marx. But for the development that we are going to follow, we are going to consider as if the expenses of labor power were immediately a simple job. Because if not, one would have to say: here a quantity of abstract labor has materialized, the magnitude of which depends on whether it is simple or complex. Instead of complicating things, the assumption is: let's consider that it is always simple work, as if it were the general form (although we know that it is not). It is a use of the assumption that contrasts with that of logical representation.

Marx is going to make the synthesis of all this development and one of the aspects in this is: with respect to use value, what plays are the qualitative differences in the different works, between the concrete ways in which the work was done. With regard to the determination of value, the only thing that plays is the quantitative, which is what has now been discovered with respect to the starting point: we already have the common quality. The contrast between material wealth and the social form that this wealth has will appear. Material wealth is the quantity of use values, the higher the use value available to society, the more material wealth it has. Material wealth may grow and at the same time the *magnitude* of value it has decreases, and this is linked to what happens to the productivity of labor. And this is an expression of the double character of work. The same time of SNALdPaI always materializes in its product the same amount of value. It doesn't matter how productive you are: this only influences the amount of usage values. When it materialized in more units, the value of each one decreased. The question of the productivity of labour refers to concrete labour. [...] It is impossible to spend the body productively without giving this expenditure a definite useful concrete form, to do abstract labor without it being at the same time Tc[16]. They are not separate things, although one can separate them analytically because of the different role they play.

[Xatan brings up the issue of work in history again.]

I am going to look at the question in two ways. Marx is going to stop to look at the question of consciousness as a properly human form of the organization of the productive expenditure of the body. One looks at work and it is a condition for human life: it does not say that *each individual* must work, but that *someone* has to work. [...] I raise the issue of conscious and voluntary labor before Marx in *Capital*, when I raise the issue of abstract labor carried out in a Private and independent way, because there are a series of proposals with a lot of presence that question the materiality of abstract labor.

When I have to make a development that starts with respect to the economic and political forms that Argentine society presents today, what we do in my courses is: we begin with a series of manifestations about the forms that the life of

[16] Concrete labor.

Argentine society presents and the question is: how do you explain all this? Because the problem is: what are we going to do about this? What are we as subjects in the face of this? A whole series of explanations appear that start or stop at concrete forms of general consciousness, of general subjectivity in the process of life in Argentina, that end up in explanations that even go so far as to have the character of a racial explanation. What we are going to do is a process that has a totally different form: we are going to start with the simplest determination or form of our human life process: a process of metabolism, in which the body has to spend itself in order to appropriate the environment and reproduce the body itself. And it is not historical: I am looking at myself, not at history, at my condition as a human subject. And the simplest thing is: I am a living subject, and life is this process of metabolism.

Every living subject, as he has to expend himself to reproduce, finds himself with the possibility that the expenditure he makes of his body does not reproduce it. Consequently, what living subjects do is to spend their bodies to a limited extent in order to virtually appropriate their condition as subjects with respect to the environment. What they need is to make a limited expenditure of their body to know if they have the potentiality that allows them to appropriate the potentialities offered by the environment to reproduce, instead of simply throwing the expenditure of their body, because the result may be that it does not reproduce. And that this appropriation of the properties that one has as a subject with respect to those offered by the environment is the process of organizing action, that is, of knowing oneself as a subject. Knowledge is a moment of action, of that expenditure, which sets in motion that if those potentialities are appropriable to me, I realize my potentialities in order to appropriate those of the environment, my action is the way in which the potentialities of the environment are realized, I appropriated the environment and reproduced my existence. As I spend my body in the action, I transform my potentialities and those of the environment, I permanently have to make a body expenditure to know the expenditure I am making. Productive expenditure is not separated from appropriation: at the moment when I am appropriating I also have to spend the body (consumptive expenditure). Knowledge is the moment of the organization of the action that is set in motion. We live in a society in which knowledge and action appear as separate and even opposite things. The fullest form of knowledge is theory, and it is separated from practice, even when one speaks of "praxis" as an application of theory.

What other determination am I going to find as a general condition of life? The expenditure of the body has as its object the reproduction of the body. Therefore, the power of the expenditure of the body has to be multiplied in order to multiply the reproduction of that living subject. This subject carries with it the need to multiply his capacity to appropriate the environment. Put in very vulgar terms: a species that is not capable of multiplying its capacity to appropriate the environment is finished: the environment changes, the potentialities it offered no longer exist, it has not developed the capacity to advance beyond the appropriation of those potentialities and it can no longer reproduce its life.

So I pose a second question: we live in a society that says that what I have just proposed does not exist, that all movement is external to concrete existences, that

nothing can contain in itself a potentiality that is not immediately the concrete realized form that it has. Then the question comes back as to why all change appears as an accident or as a subject that is external. And what I am saying is: the living being carries *with it* the need to multiply its capacity to appropriate the environment and to transform itself. If I look at this general form in the human being, I can say: the human being does not spend his body to immediately appropriate the environment and reproduce his body, but he spends his body to transform the environment and appropriate the product of that transformation, and that is what I call work.

This is not an exclusive attribute of the human being, but it is appearing as generically proper to the human being. How does it develop, what is the form that corresponds to the development of the human capacity to appropriate the environment? It is the development of the productive forces of labor, the development of the capacity of labor to transform the environment. What is the "general" way to advance in the ability to work in the environment? It is the production of means of production: it is to productively spend the body, not to produce something that serves to be incorporated into the human body and to reproduce it, but as a means to operate again on the environment by transforming it, to wear the body again, until finally in that process a means of life is produced (which serves to reproduce a human body). Human life differs from any other form of life by the power that the human subject acquires in this process of appropriation of the environment to reproduce himself. So far there is a *quantitative* difference, but what follows is a *qualitative* difference that follows the way in which this process is organized. I am not going to call the productive expenses made by animal species "work", it is simply a matter of name to be able to look at the specifics of the human being.

As the starting point of the productive expenditure of the body is separated from the result that this expenditure is going to have as the production of a means of life that reproduces the body, it carries with it the necessity that the human capacity to know (organize its expenditure) has to be extended and reach further and further. which is temporary, due to the complexity that this process takes, and it is a process of a social nature, not an individual one. […] As this happens, human knowledge will become so widespread and complex with respect to animal knowledge, that in order to be able to organize the process of human life it needs to know itself as a process of organization of human life —as knowledge—, and a knowledge that knows that it knows, that organizes, is a conscious knowledge. And now human labor is no longer differentiated from other animal productive activities by the extent of the capacity to transform the environment but by the way in which it is organized: human labor is a conscious and therefore voluntary action: because I consciously know what is the goal to which I aim, then I complete the expenditure of my action in its fullness. for which my conscience has to continue to govern that expenditure throughout the expenditure. Human work is a conscious and voluntary activity. Up to this point the forms that consciousness has not appeared. […]

When we look at the unfolding of the human life process (which is social, though carried on by the activity of the individual organs of that process), one finds that

each human generation is part of a world that has been transformed by the work of the previous generation. Consequently, each generation is the product of the conscious and voluntary action of the previous one. In short: the human being produces himself from one generation to another consciously and voluntarily. Consequently, the human being is the only subject of his own history. Animal species produce themselves from one generation to the next, but not consciously and voluntarily. This is what separates the human being as a genus from the animal species. [I advance what it says later to complete] One has the animal genus that has different species, and the human being starts out being one of them. Now it has a different way of doing this life process than the animal species. So it is no longer a species within the animal genus when we look at it with this attribute of generating itself consciously and voluntarily, but a different genus.

The younger generation can complain about the world of crap that the older generation is handing over to them. And the older generation can say: sorry, there is no return, we made this world with the best intentions. But the problem as a historical subject is not to apologize for the world we give them or to complain about the world we receive: it is what one does to give to the generation that follows them a world that is not crap. So, when one is confronted with Marx's development in *Capital*, it is the question of one's own condition as a historical subject. That deployment that I made was not done by looking at history, but by looking at the very process of human life from which I form an immediate birth; I did not start from a concept of human life, I started from what I do, that I spend all my time and I have to appropriate my environment, and that is my life; under very complex concrete forms that are here elementally unfolded, but all I do is the movement of my process of metabolism under this form, etc. Until now that condition of a free individual did not appear to me, what I know about my condition is that I am a producer of commodities, I produce them and exchange them.

This quantitative difference appears and becomes a qualitative difference. Human work begins as a simply animal knowledge, from a complex animal. We can already talk about being human because there is a quantitative difference. But one does not work "instinctively" [by responding to the chat], but consciously and voluntarily, and work has an end, but I do not understand well what an "end in action" is. It is not only about animals: plants also have ways of knowing, of organizing their appropriation of the environment. And in the human being there are all the simplest forms of knowledge that are prior to this fuller form of manifestation. The digestive system knows (under a form of knowledge that I no longer remember what it is called). As human beings advance in the development of the productive forces of their work, they not only advance in the capacity to transform the environment, what they do is transform themselves. The simplest and most immediate expression of this is the transformation of the human brain as an organ that governs conscious and voluntary action, it is the product of the development of the productive forces of human labor, it is the bearer of progress in this development of the capacity to organize social labor.

[It seems that he has been asked about whether animals limit themselves to working to "survive"]: I don't know if the term is "surviving", if animal activity is

only to survive, because they need to develop their ability to appropriate the environment. A difference with the human being in terms of this development is that the animal species "focus" the development of this capacity on the transformation of their own body, on mutation, while the human being "focuses" it on the development of the ability to operate on the environment, which generates the transformation of their own body (brain, ability to speak, etc.) [...].

[Answering a question about what "voluntary" is.] In the origin of humanity there is no *will*, because voluntary action is that which is governed by conscious knowledge. [...] This increasingly complex animal knowledge is transformed into a knowledge that knows itself as knowledge. So what I propose to differentiate work as a generically human activity, qualitatively differentiated, the consciously organized one is a *voluntary* action. Somewhere I wrote: if I fall sitting on top of a pile of flour and gnocchi comes out, I can't say that I was working because I didn't do it consciously and voluntarily.

So far we have not talked about how that consciousness and that will is determined. We are not talking about the degree they have, to what extent it knows the determinations of which it is the bearer, how it knows them, whether it stops at a more or less immediate appearance or transcends them... Now: no one today can perform his individual work if he does not have a conscious control of what he is doing and if he does not do it voluntarily. How is this will determined? I think I gave the example of the argument of the rapists' lawyers that the victim gave her consent, voluntarily accepted the rape because she did not resist. So the question is: how is that will determined? If it is determined by a knife that is placed on the victim's neck, of course he did not "voluntarily" resist, but by appealing to the will I can explain everything, because all human action is conscious and voluntary, they are always present. The problem is that I have to explain how that consciousness is determined and consequently that will. If someone hits me to work and I don't have the strength to respond to them, I am going to consciously and voluntarily get to work, but the question was how that will was determined. You cannot separate the will and the action on the other: it is a voluntary action. Why do you consciously and voluntarily get up and go to work?

I did not say that the will is abstractly free, I say: it is a voluntary action, it is not the one that an animal does when it is going to develop its vital activity. The question is, what is called "involuntary" would be an action that is not consciously governed. But the individual who is doing something that requires consciousness is putting his will into what he is doing, he has the conscious intentionality of obtaining a certain result. Why? Determinations are the key to why you're doing it. If I didn't have conscious control, I wouldn't be able to work. When the image appears that the individual has lost control of his will over the individual work he is doing, he cannot work. If I lost conscious control of the words I am saying governed by my will, then what I would do is "[unintelligible babble]" and I would not be able to give concrete form to my work. A reflex act would be an action absent of will, because I will respond with an instinctive knowledge. If a chair is suddenly thrown at my head, I raise my arm immediately; If I tried to govern that action consciously and voluntarily, there would be no time to protect myself. I take it in this sense.

If you want to give another meaning to the will... It would be an abstractly indeterminate action, because if it is determined then it would appear as an abstractly free action, what I decide to do freely would be voluntary, while what I decide to do because I have some coercion would be involuntary. We fall into what we were talking about the argument about anything forced. If I am assaulted on the street, I consciously and voluntarily put my hand in my pocket and deliver what they ask for, I am not going to say that it is involuntary in the abstract, because I did it voluntarily. Otherwise, I would have to think that there is a consciousness that is free by nature, indeterminate, and that then there are external determinations that coerce it. And this is what we are going to see with regard to the consciousness of the commodity producer. You [Xatan] use the term "freely" and I didn't talk about "freedom." I spoke of a way of organizing the action (of knowledge) that downloads the action, how does it discharge it? Voluntarily. It is generally understood as you say, but I do not understand it that way. At this point I don't know what freedom is, what a free individual or a free conscience is. I understand that it shocks you and that you object to it. The proposal is: let's go ahead and see when freedom appears. Let's just take the terms in the sense I said to see where that way of looking at it leads us, to see if it leads us to the answer regarding freedom, the voluntary and the involuntary...

[Juan proposes a synthesis of what we have seen so far with slides, starting with the analysis of what the attribute of changeability puts in.]

The proposal appears that value, the changeability of commodities, is determined because they are the materializations of socially necessary abstract labor. And many times this is repeated as if it were the explanation for the changeability of commodities. And so, to contrast it with that, I leave pending what makes concrete and abstract human labor socially necessary with respect to non-commodities and their attributes. For after saying about socially necessary abstract labour, if we are to look at labour which does not produce commodities, e.g., the labour of the friend who productively spends his body, he must give this expenditure a definite useful form. And that abstract labor that makes commodity and that which does not, are equal, the same productive expenditure of the body. Up to this point, non-commodities have the same attributes as commodities, and commodity-producing labor is identical with non-commodity-producing labor. And when one looks at socially necessary labor, what one finds is the same: the friend made the gnocchi for us, his labor is social in the sense of "made for others," and nothing says that it cannot have taken the normal time required in that society, and therefore he has done socially necessary labor with the two attributes that commodities have. And if we reach this point we do not have the answer to why commodities have the attribute of changeability, because a commodity, we have already seen that they are materializations of the same socially necessary abstract labor, if there is a relationship of equality it is clear that it has to be sustained in socially necessary abstract labor. But it is not enough.

I emphasize this a lot because in many developments that appear within Marxist political economy and Marxism in general, what is specific to commodity-producing labor disappears. Hopefully we get to the socially necessary work, but

what is missing is what is specific to this work, and that is that this is a work that is done privately and independently, which implies that the one who performs it has full control over his individual work. Their conscience governs their individual work, consciously and voluntarily. No one can tell him what he has to do and at the same time he does not know who he is working for nor does he care in the sense that he has full control of himself, of what he is going to produce, how he is going to produce (an aspect that is not present so far), how much he is going to produce... To have that control he has to have private ownership over his means of production, because if he shares them we saw that he could not have full control. And here what appears is a social labor that is carried out privately and independently. And it is that: socially necessary abstract labor performed privately and independently that gives commodities the attribute of changeability.

	Restaurant: commodities $10G_C = 1S_C$	Friend's house: no commodities $10G_{\neg C}$ $1S_{\neg C}$	Relative attributes
Regarding its use value: uv	uv Gc ≠ uvSc	uv $G_{\neg C}$ ≠ uv$S_{\neg C}$	uv $G_c = G_{\neg C}$ uv$S_C = S_{\neg C}$
The dual character of the action: *a* Exchange value: *ev*	$a_{uvGc} \neq a_{vuSc}$ *a* $a_{evGc} = a_{evSc}$	$a_{uvG\neg c} \neq a_{vuS\neg c}$ *a* — —	$a_{uvGc} = a_{vuG\neg c}$ $a_{uvSc} = a_{vuS\neg c}$
natural actions: *na*	$na_{uvGc} \neq na_{uvSc}$ *na* — —	$na_{uvG\neg c}$ ≠ $an_{uvS\neg c}$ *na* — —	$na_{uvGc} = na_{uvG\neg c}$ $na_{uvSc} = na_{uvS\neg c}$
Human labor: *l* Concrete labor: *cl* Abstract labor: *al*	$cl_{Gc} \neq cl_{Sc}$ *l* $al_{Gc} \neq al_{Sc}$	$cl_{G\neg c} \neq cl_{S\neg c}$ *l* $al_{G\neg c} \neq al_{S\neg c}$	$cl_{Gc} = cl_{G\neg c}$ $cl_{Sc} = cl_{S\neg c}$ but also $al_{Gc} = al_{G\neg c}$ $al_{S\neg c} = al_{S\neg c}$
Socially necessary abstract labor: *snal*	$cl_{Gc} \neq cl_{Sc}$ *l* $snal_{Gc} = snal_{Sc}$	$cl_{G\neg c} \neq cl_{S\neg c}$ *l* $snal_{G\neg c} = snal_{S\neg c}$	$snal_{G\neg c} = snal_{N\neg c}$ $snal_{S\neg c} = snal_{S\neg c}$
Socially necessary labor done privately and independently: *snalpi*	$cl_{Gc} \neq cl_{Sc}$ *l* $snalpi_{Gc}$ = $snalpi_{Sc}$	$cl_{G\neg c} \neq cl_{S\neg c}$ *l* — —	

Marx takes the central column (on non-commodities [¬m]) in the section on fetishism, where he will synthetically make two statements: this is in this, this in this... And so it seems that they are the same. The only thing that is in one and not in the other is social labor carried out privately and independently. And then he goes on to make a comparison of a series of ways of organizing work that correspond to the absence of the commodity bond as a general social relation. Here one can make an observation of a methodological nature.

Somehow, if someone were to say it in a pedagogical way, this way of presenting it (in the scheme) is easier to appropriate development, but it lacks it. It infringes the method of dialectical knowledge because its analysis is carried out purely and exclusively on the first column (of commodities), which is the one that has to

account for why commodities are exchangeable objects. Marx is going to present it after he has done all the development not only of why commodities are exchangeable objects (because they are materializations of socially necessary abstract labor done in a Private and independent way) but why when socially necessary abstract labor is done privately and independently, its product has this attribute, something that the analysis in no way answered. What this first step answered is: this is what makes them changeable. But why is that necessary? Marx waits until he has answered that to make the parallel deployment [on what are not commodities].

Alejandro: Regarding the scheme, it is not clear to me why it would go against the methodology that has been developed so far [...].

JIC: It's essentially: I have this thing and I want to ask myself about the need for this thing. I have to look for it in this thing, I don't have to go looking for it in what this thing is not. Then, in the process of knowing and producing one's own consciousness, one resorts to a whole series of movements that are of logical representation and are not simply of strict dialectical analysis. At least I do that, I try not to do it but... I don't have a definitive answer. I am an individual who is trained in logical reasoning, I do not know in a society where there was no logical representation what the process of knowledge would be like, if indeed I would only take the object and ask itself about its necessity in order to be able to answer it or not.

If one compares with the analysis made by classical and neoclassical economics, the analysis of these two constructions, let's say [those of the scheme], is based on looking for which is the attribute that appears repeated. In Ricardo it is very clearly placed, because he makes the analysis without distinguishing between concrete and abstract labor, he only reaches human work. And it seems to him that by nature human labor produces changeable objects (this came from Smith), and he does not ask himself why there are use-values that are not changed. But when you get to [Human Labor → Restaurant: Commodities], what you're looking at is that this question in front of you has something to do with how work is organized. For him it is a natural way of organizing work, but it has to do with something that is related to the allocation of work in society to different individuals. When he looks a little more at that, it appears (it already appeared in Smith) that it is full of antagonistic relationships, opposing interests, this is a war of all against all, there are public enemies (some more public and others less), and it seems to him that it is natural.

What does neoclassical economics do? Which is often presented as the reaction to Marx's development. And the neoclassical economists and the founders of neoclassical economics most likely did not know that there was an individual with the surname "Marx". They are frightened by what appeared here (that when one looks at the work antagonistic relations appear) and what it does is stop here [*vu*, 1st column], and says: they are use values, they are useful, and that is why they are changeable. He is going to add the "scarce" son (which is the absence of productive activity as the cause of changeability, in contrast to Ricardo, who saw work as a cause), erases productive activity because there is scarcity, it is not enough, and he

stops at that point of the analysis. And never, neither Smith nor Ricardo nor neoclassical economics, look at the second column [¬m]: for them this is natural and it is the whole. It is an analysis (in Ricardo it is crudely put) that will appear saying: "These are the principles of political economy," and they are stated: "Use-value is a condition for there to be exchange-value, but it has nothing to do with the determination of exchange-value. The exchange value in exceptional cases depends on scarcity (a "scarcity" different from that of neoclassical economics), it is normal, it is because they are the product of labor." There is no question as to what the need is, it is an analysis that has a different character.

[…] So far I can only explain the changeability of commodities because there is the same quantity in both. There is no choice but to go ahead to see if we can come up with an explanation by which commodities that might not have the same materialization as SNALdPaI, are nevertheless presented as having an equal relationship. So far this is totally inexplicable. […] Marx reaches a point in development, sends a draft to Engels and replies: get ready because they are going to jump on your neck, because you are saying that commodities are exchanged in proportion to the quantities of labor they contain, and "everyone knows" that commodities are not exchanged in proportion to the quantities of labor. Why does Engels say "everyone knows..."? Because that's what Smith and Ricardo said. And in the face of this question, Marx's answer is: if I wanted to answer these objections, I would have to destroy the dialectical method. Because I would have to begin to answer determinations that up to now are not yet developed, deployed. And Marx has an ironic comment: the dialectical method has the advantage (it is not a defect) that it sets traps. And in the text he puts the answer that corresponds in other terms: it would be necessary to develop this, this and this, and if one does not know what that is, one has no reason why the commodities of the capitalist mode of production are not exchanged in proportion to the quantities of labor. This observation is more or less in the first half of Volume 1. The answer is not in the 2nd half of Volume 1, nor in Volume 2, it is approximately from chapter V of Volume 3.

3. The form of value or exchange value

In the next step, Marx is going to state: up to this point we have that this attribute of exchangeability of commodities is social, that commodities have a natural form (use value) as corporeality, and the form of value: they are values. Following the analysis of commodities, what appears is: no matter how much we turn a commodity in isolation, we cannot find in it its condition of value, the only thing I see in it is the natural form. So we have to see how the commodity expresses itself in its condition of value. And the expression of the condition of value is exchange value. That which we had left aside (the exchange relation) now we have no choice but to return to exchange value, which is the expression of value. And what appears is that we return to the relationship of equality between two commodities.

A. SIMPLE, SINGULAR OR CONTINGENT FORM OF VALUE[17]

x **commodity A = *y*** **commodity B, or: *x*** **commodity A is worth *and*** **commodity B.**

(20 linen yards = 1 frock coat, or: 20 linen yards is worth 1 frock coat)[18]

1. *The two poles of the expression of value: relative form of value and form of equivalent.*

What is the simplest form of value like? A commodity placed in an exchange relation with another commodity whose use-value is different, but as values they are the same. But value is not manifested in this relation by its substance (quantities of labour), just as when I look at the commodity in isolation I see no quantities of labour, only its body (use-value). When I want to express the value embodied in the commodity, I find that what expresses the value of one commodity are quantities of the body of another commodity. I have, for example[19]: 10G = 1S. This is the immediate reading of the expression of value. Nowhere do quantities of labour appear: value can never be expressed in its substance, only relatively in quantities of the use-value of another commodity. Marx is not going to make it explicit there, but this opens up a second question[20]: why, if value is quantities of labour, can it not be expressed in quantities of labour except in the form of exchange value, in quantities of another use value?

2. *The relative form of value.*

a) Content of the relative form of value

Marx clarifies: the expression of the value of a commodity always takes the form of a quantitative relation, always the value of a quantity of use-values is expressed in a quantity of the body of another commodity. In this relationship the 10G are expressing *their* value. I don't know how much a pair of shoes is worth, this relationship doesn't tell me. So, what I am going to have are two poles that fulfill different roles: there is one that enters the exchange relation to express its value but can only express it in the use value of another commodity, and the other commodity does not express its own value, what it does is put its body so that the first one can express its value. So Marx is going to propose: it functions as the equivalent in value of the 10G (relative pole). If I wanted to know how much the value of 1S *is*, I'm going to turn the relationship around: then I know how much the pair of shoes are worth but I don't know how much 10 G is worth. Thus, in the commodity which functions as an equivalent, no magnitude of value is manifested in itself. It serves to express the magnitude of the value of the other, but it cannot

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[17] Title in the 3rd and 4th editions of *Capital* (indicated in footnote of the Siglo XXI edition).

[18] Marx, K., *Capital* (1977:15), Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

[19] 10 Gnocchi plates = 1 pair of shoes. Marx expresses it in linen sticks and frock coats.

[20] The first was why, when socially necessary abstract labor is done privately and independently, its materialization is represented as the value of commodities.

express the magnitude of its own value because then it would have to have: $1S = x$ hours of labor. And the value of commodities is never expressed in quantities of labour. So far we only know that they are changed because there is the same amount of SNALdPaI. Is it a lot? Is that little? We can't say (if it's 10 am, 5 am...).

Now a new problem is going to come to us, which in a way takes us out of this discovery of qualities and leads us to the problem of the quantitative determination of the value of commodities, which we already know that we are not going to be able to measure in quantities of labor, but we know that the value of a unit of commodity has a relationship directly proportional to the quantity of labor that was expended. but inversely proportional to the productivity of that work. When we are faced with the quantitative expression of value [in the exchange ratio] this is going to create a problem for us.

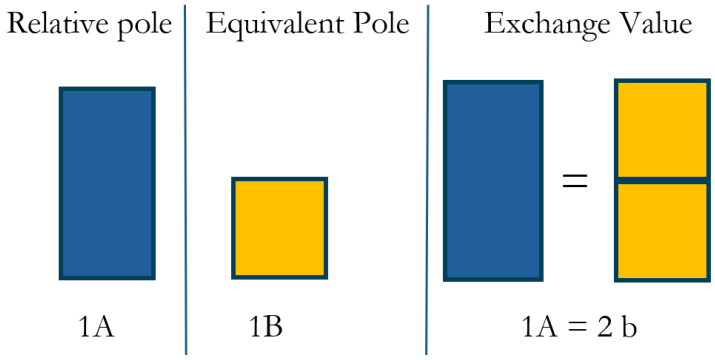
One last remark I should have made earlier: "10VL = 1L," reads "10 yards of linen is worth 1 frock coat," not that "10 frock coats are worth 1 frock coat." An example (very rude and with the problem that restaurant menus are not expressed in shoes): when one reads a menu, on the left side it has use values, and on the right the expression of the value of those different use values, in quantities of one thing. And when you read it you don't say: this thing on the left is worth the value of what is on the right.

At this point, Marx says: this is the same thing that the analysis of the value of the commodity had told us. But now this is being told to us by the commodity in its very movement. He is telling us that the labour which the commodity contains, abstracted from its concrete form as human labour, is what determines the value of this commodity, and that in entering into the relation of exchange with the frock coat, what he is saying is that it has this condition in common with it. Now commodities say it "in their language," [21]they express this potentiality that they have when they enter into a relationship of exchange with the other commodity. But it is not an abstract expression of value: it is quantitatively determined. Here begins the problem of how the value of one commodity is expressed in quantities of the body of another, in particular according to what happens to the productivity of labor.

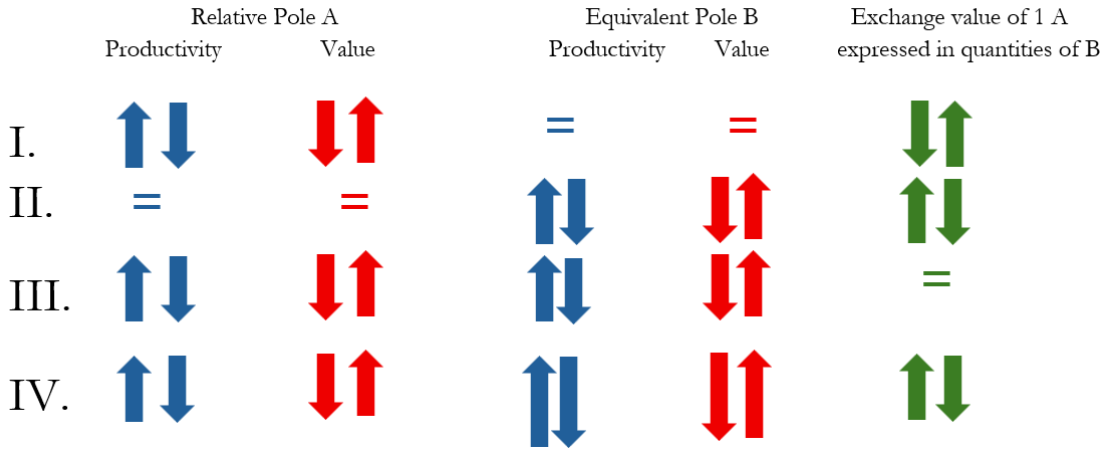
b) Quantitative determinability of the relative form of value

I am going to take it here with commodity *A* and commodity *B*, where I am not going to put what quantity of labor each one contains—to reinforce that one does not know—but I am going to put the relative quantity of one with respect to the other. I have *A* at the relative pole and *B* at the equivalent pole. *A* is the product of twice the amount of labor as B. Therefore, **1A = 2B**.

[21] Marx, K., *Capital* (1977:19), Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE: "What happens is that the canvas expresses its ideas in its peculiar language, in the language of a commodity."



This is the starting point. What happens when work productivity changes?[22]



I. The first movement we are going to have in the productivity of labor is that the productivity of labor produced by *A is* doubled, then each unit of *A* contains half as much labor as before and the commodity *B* remains the same, therefore **1A = 1B**. It changes the value of the commodity and is immediately expressed as a change in exchange-value, and it is also expressed in the same sense.

II. Now an inverse situation appears: nothing happened with the productivity of the labor that produces *A*, but the productivity of the labor that B produced doubled. Thus, the value of *B* was halved: **1A = 4B**. And now I look at A's expression, knowing that its value didn't change, but the exchange value doubled because each unit of *B* contains half the value it did before, now I need **4B** to express **1A**. If only the productivity of the labor produced by *A* decreased, the opposite movement would occur: the value of A goes up and I will need more quantities of *B* even though each one is worth the same.

III. If the productivity of the labour produced *by A* and that of the labour produced *by B* is doubled, the value of commodities changes, but its expression as exchange-value remains the same as at the beginning: **1A = 2B**. An observation: value *by itself* does not change, it does not have a movement of its own, *it always* changes because the productivity of the labor that produces the commodity has changed [...].

[22] Below I indicate with "I", "II", "III" and "IV" the cases as they appear in Marx's text. I have also indicated them on the JIC slide.

IV. The last example is given to see how it can manifest itself in a movement of the value of the commodity in a sense opposed to that of exchange-value. The productivity of the labor that produces A rises (suppose it doubles), its value falls by half, but that of the labor that produces B rises proportionally more (it quadruples) and its value falls more sharply (a 1/4 part). The value of A fell, but the expression of the value of *A* in quantities of *B* went up because the value of *B* fell more. So I have a B decrease in value movement that manifests as an increase in value expression movement. And the same thing the other way around: the productivity of both falls, etc., the exchange value falls even though the value of A has increased.

Two observations:

1) When I look at the result, I have the same movement in the exchange value part in three of the cases, the results are the same. If I do not look at what happened to the productivity of the work of one and the other, I cannot know what is the character of the movement that took place.

2) If I have a general movement in which there is no increase in the *total* quantity of labour that society does (it always does the same quantity), and, let's say, *A* and *B* are the only commodities there are, and the productivity of labour rises in parallel with the production of *A* and *B*, then the unit value of *A* will always remain the same (case **III**). But since the quantity produced of *A* and *B* increased, if I multiply the unit exchange-value by the quantity of units produced, it will *seem* to me that the mass of value increased, but it did not change.

For example: I had **10A** and **10B** as the total product of society, and the productivity of the labor produced by *A* and *B* multiplied, with the same amount of work I now have **20A** and **20B**. If I am going to evaluate the production of this society in quantities of *B*, it will seem that the mass of value that there is has grown, because each unit value is the same, each unit of *A* is still worth **1B**, but I have twice the amount of units of *A*. But the mass of courage stood still. And this is a problem that one has when one has to analyze statistics, which are in quantities of a commodity that functions as an equivalent.

One can deceive oneself and it seems to one that the mass of value produced by a society is growing, but the only thing that is happening is that in that commodity that is used as an equivalent and in the set of other commodities the productivity of labor is growing in parallel, and then each unit of the commodity of the equivalent contains less value. as in the others; and since there is more quantity of the others, it seems to me that there is a greater mass of value. This plays a central role when one has to analyze the evolution of the value of commodities: the capacity of the equivalent pole to express value, what happens to its own value, and what happens to the total mass of value that is produced. If there is the same amount of total labour, there is always the same quantity of total value (socially necessary abstract labour). If it is distributed because the productivity of labor is higher in a larger number of units, each unit has a smaller piece of value [and vice versa].

I take this opportunity to make this clarification [...]. Up to this point [value] is the amount of labor that was expended in producing the commodity. It comes from classical economics, it is in Smith, and Ricardo clarifies it: the amount of labor that was expended to produce the commodity is not only direct labor, but also the value of the means of production that was used to produce it appears as a determination in the value of the commodity: living or immediate labor and dead labor. When Marx goes on, he dispenses with this clarification except when he no longer looks at the simple production of commodities by capital: there he will also look at what happens to the value of the means of production.

Sometimes, waiting so long can lend itself to some confusion, which is why I raise it before. But to put it to one must have already answered why when labour performed privately and independently, being a material expenditure of human labour-power, is nevertheless represented as a purely social attribute of its product, which is the value of the commodity. When one is confronted with this question that dead labour is materialised in the means of production on condition that it has been social labour performed privately and independently, why does it have to appear in the value of the product that is made from it? But if one does not have the answer to the question we ask ourselves [why this work gives the attribute of changeability to the commodity], the answer becomes an abstract statement. And in fact in Ricardo he is put like this, in his title he already starts by saying that he is going to put the principles of political economy and taxation, and announces them: 1) use value; 2) exchange value; (3) labour applied to the production of the means of production and labour immediately applied to the production of the commodity.

[Necessity, determination, and the question of "determinism"].

To face this, since it is not a question of enunciation of principles, let us take ourselves as objects of the question. And if we look at ourselves, the first thing we are going to have in front of us is that we are a current existence. This existence has a concrete form, but at the same time it is the bearer of a multiplicity of powers to be realized that sprout, that are carried in their current existence. These powers are the concrete condition of current existence and therefore of what one is. So, when I say "necessity," it is because that which one is carries with it that multiplicity of powers to be realized, and this is its necessity, it is *determined* as the bearer of these powers.

Often, what appears when it comes to a power to be realized is the *image* that it is a simple power, that it has an immediate realization, and does not exist in the form of possibility, it has only one way of realizing itself, it is not carried together with powers that are opposed to it; and consequently, If one looks at it strictly, it does not even have a temporal dimension because, as it is simple, it is immediately realized on itself. Now, I could take it as an expression of simple potency but abstracted from its way of realizing itself: we need to breathe, if we stopped breathing we would stop reproducing ourselves as the current existence that carries these potentialities, we would become a current existence whose potentiality is to begin to rot, to decompose, because it would be a body that no longer has the potentiality to reproduce itself, it would cease to be a living existence. We have the simple need to breathe. This potentiality of breathing does not exist at the same time together with an equally powerful potentiality of not breathing. We can hold our breath for a short time, but to affirm ourselves in the realization of our current existence we need to breathe.

What other form does necessity have? One has with oneself powers which, as if realized, are contradictory to each other: I cannot breathe and not breathe at the same time. I have the temporary potential to not breathe, but I cannot perform both at the same time. The fact that I am going to realize my present existence by realizing my powers, I can realize one or I can realize the other, the realization of these two powers cannot exist in the same concrete way. At every moment of my existence, that potency exists in the form of possibility. Hegel makes a reference to this: it is a necessity that at the same time is not a necessity at all. And the general form of the potentialities of all forms of existence (and of the living subject in particular), the way in which one carries one's determinations, one's necessity, is in the form of possibility: they are powers that can be realized in one form or another.

When I say that something is *determined*, I mean that the actual existence that carries that power to be realized, when that existence comes to an end, realizes that potency, takes the concrete form that corresponds to that potency as realized. Determination is not an external relation between two things, it is an actual existence which realizes its powers (comes to an end) and takes on a new concrete form, which has been determined by the previous actual existence. That form is a current existence which is the form in which the previous existence has transcended itself and taken on this new form. In the case of living subjects, the

peculiarity is that when we reach our end and realize our powers, we determine ourselves as a new concrete form, we reproduce ourselves. The moment we cannot realize our powers with this attribute, our life is over and we become a matter that ceased to be a subject and became a corpse that is the object of the life process of other forms of life, but not that of oneself.

I want to emphasize that determination is not an external relationship. It is not that *A* determines *B* and they are things that exist independently of each other or that have a mechanical relationship with each other. When I say that one actual existence *determines* another, it is that it realized its powers, and its powers were to take the form of the other. When one looks at the movement of the realization of the powers, it as it unfolds it can take a simple form in realization (then it unfolds), or it can take the form of possibility. The process of realization itself contains powers that are contradictory to each other as realized. They are all ways of realizing the power with which we are starting, but in their movement of realization they are contradictory. Not only does necessity exist in the form of possibility, but the realization of necessity itself has the form of possibility.

If I ask myself about knowledge (the way of organizing action),[23] if I look at it as a subject, what I am saying is that knowledge is the way to govern the unfolding of potentialities. These potentialities exist in the process of human life in general in the concrete form of needs which are at the same time the negation of necessity (possibilities): I fully know the potentialities of my action in the form in which these potentialities exist before I perform the action. Which means that when I trigger the action whose realization is going to be mediated by possibility, nothing says that the objective to which I aimed is assured. When you look at the commodity producer, you will see that what he needs to do is to produce value, and that he is going to put all his consciousness and his will into it even though he is not guaranteed to produce it. It would only be "guaranteed" if in reality the production of value were a simple necessity, if the expenditure of labor power simply took the form of value.

Determinism is the belief that necessity exists only in the form of simple necessity, and that when I know it I already know how it is going to be realized, and it cannot be realized in any way other than that. But at no time do we talk about that here. Here we are talking about a whole deployment and at no time are we talking about simple necessity. When we looked at the expression of value, we saw that if the value of a commodity changes, the expression in exchange value of that commodity changes, but the value may not change and the exchange value may change, and the value of the commodity and the value of the equivalent may change and the exchange value may not change. We are going to have to face the simple determination that changes in the productivity of labor are going to produce changes in the value of commodities, but the manifestation of these changes exists in the form of possibility.

Many times this is posed in terms of freedom VS determinism, but they are not on the same ground. Freedom would be a way of governing action and determinism is a conception of how action is governed. When this is appealed to, it

[23] **JIC:** I clarify: this also happens to objects that are not living subjects [not to govern their action, but to have potentialities to be realized and to be the product of powers, etc.].

is appealed to by subjects who are terrified of determination, who are deluded by a freedom that they suppose consists in the absence of determination. And if one as a subject were not the bearer of determinations, the first thing is that he would not exist, but if he also abstracted from a subject that was not the bearer of determinations, of powers, that does not have needs that spring from what he is, from his being, and that are going to be manifested in his doing... if he is not determined to be effective enough to appropriate the environment, he could never act as a subject. And if this means is not determined by the potentialities that it has to realize in such a way that the subject can become the concrete form of realizing the potentialities of the object, then the subject could not act on that object. The appearance of the absence of determination, which has come to occupy a substantial place in scientific consciousness in the capitalist mode of production in general and today in an absolute way, is the denial of the capacity to organize one's own action, of the condition of the subject, under the appearance that it is the fullness of the subject. because it has nothing to determine it (that does not exist), and what that says is that in reality it is incapable of recognizing itself in its determinations, that it refuses to recognize itself. The question is why he needs to deny himself in his subjectivity.

The simplest determination of the human being is that he is a form of matter. Matter is this present existence that carries with it the necessity of reaching its end by realizing its powers. The difference between *living matter* and that which is not living is that living matter, when it reaches its end and asserts itself by realizing its powers, what it has is that it reproduced itself. Inert matter, when it reaches its end, ceases to be what it was, it does not reproduce itself. I'm coming to my end all the time and reproducing. A stone has powers to be realized: if rain falls on it or is moved by the wind, etc., it turns it into sand and ceases to be the stone, it came to its end and became something else. The living subject, when it reaches its absolute end as a living subject, ceases to be a living subject, the powers it realized are no longer those that reproduce it.

Possibility is a form of necessity. One can distinguish between the simple necessity which is immediate and the necessity which exists in the form of possibility. They are powers which can all exist as powers in the same present existence, but which cannot all exist as realized in the same present existence. Potentiality is a need that is not realized and that one carries in one's current existence. The possibility is the forms that these potentialities can have. There are many materialists who are mechanistic, and to the mechanist what may appear is that every need is simple, every power is a simple power, and it is an external relation. There are two figures that I mention in my book, which symbolize this deterministic conception:

1) Laplace's demon: everything is determined in the form of simple needs, nothing has the form of possibility. The problem of knowledge is not that it is known because it exists under possibility, but that there is a problem of the insufficiency of knowledge. If knowledge were full, like that of Laplace's demon, everything would be realized immediately as a simple power. What I propose is the opposite: these powers exist in the form of possibility and can only be known in this way, they cannot be known as realized because

they cannot be faced as realized. He knows them fully, objectively, as what they are at the moment he is knowing them. That is why it may be that one aimed to realize one of the powers of which one was the bearer and what was realized is a very different power from the one one one one he intended.

2) An expression made by Einstein that "God does not play dice", which is also the denial of possibility. What is the purest example of determination as the simplest possibility? The dice.

I do not want to go deeper into questions of method, because these are part of the foundations of logical representation, but let us leave them for later.

[JIC asked about what previous developments or authors it relies on] Conscious consciousness or knowledge was the human way of governing action. We are talking about social and individual work. When you activate your consciousness (which you do all the time) you are organizing a productive expenditure of your individual body. But we also saw that this expenditure can have as its purpose the production of a use value for others: it is social labor. Since consciousness is the way in which each one governs his or her own activity as an organ of the process of social life, no one can produce consciousness in another individual, what he can do is operate on the process of production of that other consciousness. Our consciousness is produced by each oneself, but at the same time it is the product of social labor. "Prior developments" are an expression of the product of social labor. It is very difficult for one to say: well, I am going to cut back on this or that. Because in turn those who have produced the product of which one appropriated, we have a concrete author whose consciousness is the product of previous social labor and of his individual work, but the product of previous social labor was the product of previous social labor. If you put it that way, it seems that you have to cut back from here and there, but what you're really doing is appropriating a lot of products from previous social labor. Later we will see a statement by Marx on scientific knowledge related to this.

I don't know if it's relevant in the end. I would have to say that *Capital*, the *Science of Logic*, Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*, Athanase Joja (who is not so well known)... I would have to name many others who have operated in my process of consciousness production, precisely rejecting it and saying: this is not it. So I don't know if it makes sense to propose which are the authors that one can recognize more immediately as antecedents of what he is proposing. I would have to put it in these terms: it is from the work with the production of these authors that I was confronted with these aspects as I am proposing them. [...] This approach *in my terms* is displayed in *Capital: historical reason, revolutionary subject and consciousness*[24], if I remember correctly in chapter 7. It may also be in some different respects in a previous book on dialectical knowledge [he doesn't remember the title well, it's long].

[24] https://cicpint.org/es/inigo-carrera-juan-2003-el-capital-razon-historica-sujeto-revolucionario-y-conciencia-imago-mundi/

[**Examples from the workshop from Chile, session 1**[25]]

[…] We have the simple need to die as human subjects, not mediated by the possibility of not dying, there is no such possibility that we will not die. In what form is this possibility realized? The realization of the simple need to die has the way of being realized through the realization of the need, of the opposite possibility, which is to continue to be alive. Since I want to stay alive, how do I organize my conscious and voluntary action to reproduce myself as a living subject? I take this figure that is absurd but understandable: I watch cartoons, and you worry about a piano falling on you in the street as happens in the series, and I say that this is a possibility that is not simply fantastic. In Buenos Aires it has happened that a balcony collapsed, fell on one's head and killed him. So, I go down the street looking up so that I don't drop something on my head, and I turn the corner and a car hits me and kills me. Then I look and say: the possibility that something will fall on my head has a very unlikely quantitative determination, with respect to being run over, which is much more likely, so I am going to look at the side of the cars when crossing. Then I look, cross and a car comes to me from the opposite side and kills me. I acted consciously and voluntarily in order to reproduce my life, I knew the potentialities that seemed to me to make sense to try to control and there was one that I could not control.

There is another aspect that I think is very important to take into account in this. […] As you get older, you increase the chance of having a stroke, which 100 years ago was a simple necessity to die: there was no possibility of staying alive. Today it exists in the form of possibility, but which can only be realized by someone who has a particular consciousness that is a certain scientific consciousness: a doctor. Who should be called if one does not have that scientific awareness.

[**We resume the development of the workshop**]

So, I told them: please, call an ambulance as quickly as possible because there come individuals who do know, consciously and voluntarily, how to operate on this object, which is the individual who had the stroke. How does human action advance by developing its capacity to operate on the environment and on itself? If one had an absolute simple need, it is realized and there is no way to operate on it. But the general, universal concrete form of necessity is possibility. What happens is that there are needs that have the absolutely dominant adverse possibility and a small possibility of operating on it. What is human beings doing? It transforms what seemed like a simple need into a possibility. For example, the chance of surviving smallpox was negligible. Then, E. Jenner observed that in individuals who milked cows the possibility of survival was high. What do you do with the development of the vaccine? To turn what was a practically simple need not only into a possibility, but smallpox disappears (which is doubtful, because the virus will continue to walk somewhere), or it becomes a simple need on the opposite side. The human being transforms these simple needs into more or less possible. In this development there are dominant needs or possibilities that one is going to turn around, which can only be turned around with objective, scientific knowledge.

[25] Mine addition. Transcribed from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1WllwvMJas.

And one can say: if attending to a relatively simple organic process of an individual who has a stroke can only be done by individuals who have certain scientific knowledge, why transform the organization of the process of human social metabolism (much more complex because it is the organization of the processes of individual metabolism, of which stroke is a concrete form), Why could this transformation be carried out with a consciousness that does not have the character of an objective, scientific consciousness? And many times this is what is presented as the denial of the need for objective consciousness, it is even presented as the condition for overcoming the capitalist mode of production: there are proposals that say that it is better not to know, because knowing starts from being and what matters is doing. Now the question arises as the action of an individual who lacks determination or is abstracted from his determinations, he has no being.

Simple example of the six-sided die: there is a material determination in the body of that die: that it is homogeneous. If I throw it into the air over a sufficiently wide surface, it has the simple necessity of landing on that flat surface, but it has in the form of the possibility on which side it is going to fall. In the air he will pass through positions in which tipping towards one side or the other has the same possibility. The realization of the possibility of falling on one of the 6 faces takes the form in its development of the permanent renewal of the possibility. How do I act if I want to govern that possibility? I load[26] the die, distribute its body asymmetrically, and then it will fall more times on the face that I want. Then I have again the expression of a simple necessity which in turn has the form of possibility.

Engels: Freedom is the necessity that is known. If I know my determinations *as far as possible* (which are powers that exist under possibility and my conscious and voluntary action can be carried out in one direction), what I am going to do is point in that direction. If I say that I have no determinations, and I do not know them, my action will be blind and I do not know where it will go. If I stop at the appearance of necessity that an action has, I can believe that I am doing one thing and in reality I am doing an entirely different thing. On the other hand, if I know my determinations, the more I know them, the more I will be pointing out that if this is the possibility I want to realize, I am carrying it out, which does not take away the possibility that this set of determinations will take my action elsewhere. That is why freedom and necessity.

3. *The form of equivalent.*

Let us return to the question of why the commodity has value and why the SNALdPaI produces this social attribute. It was evident that it produces this attribute in the exchange relation, where it is expressed. In this expression we find that value is never expressed in quantities of labour, but in quantities of the body of another commodity, the roles of relative/equivalent, etc. [...] Now we are going to continue asking what role each of these commodities plays. But first I want to ask a question.

[26] "Loading" is tricking.

The private labour performed by each commodity producer is determined as either a part of social labour [or] as socially useless labour at the very moment the labour is performed. At the very moment of its production, the commodity contains value (it has the capacity to be exchangeable) or not, its labor has been performed in a concrete form that is not socially useful and therefore has no value. The problem we face so far is that this is not evident when we look at the commodity, whether it is a value or not, it is only seen in the exchange relation. What is going to happen to the commodity that is at the relative pole of the expression? That one will only express that it has value when it is related to the equivalent. But what is proving that it is the product of SNALdPaI is the commodity that is expressing its value. And how can he express it? Because it is equal to the equivalent. Consequently, in this exchange relation, the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent acts as the expression of value, and therefore as the expression of being the bearer of being the materialization of socially useful labor. While the commodity that enters to express its value in the exchange relation has to show that it has value, the one that is at the pole of the equivalent, in this expression, what it is showing is that it is exchangeable directly with the other commodity, that it has value.

Gnocchi and shoes: *G* has to enter into the exchange ratio to express its value. *S*, which acts as an equivalent, does not enter into this relation to prove that it has value, but as an expression of value, as the possibility of being immediately exchanged with the other commodity. If I didn't have courage, I wouldn't have been able to enter into that relationship. [...] One does not read the expression of value as "worth the value of..." (expression of a magnitude of value), but "1 frock coat is worth 10 yards of linen": quantities of an object, of a different use value. If we look at the commodity that acts as an equivalent, it could not express the magnitude of its own value. Here appeared the development of a contradiction that we had seen was proper to the commodity: it was use value and value. Now we find that the use value of a commodity is the way in which the value of another commodity is expressed, it can only be expressed in quantities of a different use value. No commodity can act as its own equivalent. If I say "10 yards of linen = 10 yards of linen" I have no expression of its value.

[Answer to Xatan's question about the bidirectionality of the simple relation of value] In this relation I have a commodity that expresses its value and another that is the equivalent. I know how much 1 frock coat is worth: 10 yards of linen. If I want to know how much the 10 yards of canvas are worth, I have to turn the expression around: 10 yards of canvas are worth 1 frock coat. That *simple form* of value is now telling me how much 10 yards of linen are worth, but I don't know how much 1 frock coat is worth. In each case it is inverted, it is a different expression. The problem is that there is equality, they have the same attribute but when they enter the relationship one pole expresses one thing and the other another. And these roles are not interchangeable *within the same relation*: I lost the expression of the value of one commodity and now I have the expression of the other.

[...] I return to the example of the restaurant menu. What I read is how much things on the left are worth, it doesn't tell me how much things on the right are worth (I make the caveat that this requires a development of forms of value expression that we are not seeing so far). I am clear that the menu tells me the value of what is on the left and how much of what is on the right I have to deliver. If I go to the shoe store it is the other way around, I have a "menu" of shoes and on the right amounts of a thing that expresses its value. Equality is symmetrical, but expression is asymmetrical. And what follows are more manifestations of the asymmetry.

If one looks at the one at the pole of the equivalent, what one sees is a material body expressing a social attribute. There is no overt social relation to this, and it seems that by nature that material body has that capacity to express value. And a first development will appear from the development of the expression of value, of the consciousness of the producers of commodities, because it will appear as a natural attribute of the one on the right as the capacity to represent a social bond. This is where Marx is going to restate that for there to be the exchange rate there must be a common attribute. This expression will mean that the properties that an object has do not arise from the relationship it has with another object, what happens with that relationship is that *it is evident* that it had a certain attribute. Faced with the appearance that the equivalent pole has the natural property of expressing value, Marx will refer to the mysterious character of the form of the equivalent, which the economist will only face when it appears materialized in money.

It is a material thing that, when one looks at it, seems to have by nature the attribute of expressing a social relationship, which is manifested. This is what he is going to raise as a possibility. The economist realizes that he is a prisoner of this possibility when the equivalent is in the form of money, because there is fully developed the social attribute of a material thing (I take a leap forward) that is *socially recognized* as having that social attribute, then it seems that it has that capacity to express value by nature. But that gaze is not a fantasy: it is not that the economist looked at something that does not really exist, that he invented: his problem is that he stopped to look at that something and did not ask himself why we have come to unfold. So, when he had to answer about the social attribute that this something has, he said: it comes from nature. He did not ask himself what contents the exchange relation contains and why it can only be expressed in the exchange relation.

In the classical economists, the private character of work is not looked at. So it is not possible to explain the difference in paper between commodities according to the pole at which they are. So when it comes to money (I jump, but I'm going to put it in Adam Smith's terms) it's because if value is quantities of labor it is not expressed in quantities of labor. Smith says: because one is not *used* to changing things for quantities of work, but for other things. But in reality you don't change things for other things either: you exchange things for money. Why then is value being quantities of labor expressed with money? Because it is "easier and more natural". This is the expression of having arrived at the fetish of money. Up to this point, Smith does not ask himself about the role that each commodity plays

according to the place in which it is, he does not analyze, he does not unfold the form of value: he jumps from the simple expression to money. The classic example goes: in the "rough and primitive state of society," if hunting a deer takes half the work as hunting a beaver, it is natural for one deer to be exchanged for two beavers. And he never asks himself if the deer and the beaver in that expression of change fulfill different roles. And it jumps to money: it seems more natural to us to exchange commodities for money, so money has the natural capacity to represent value. And Marx is going to say that they cannot explain it.

So far it is only stated that, only if the work is carried out privately and independently, does this attribute of changeability appear. In this development, as it has flowed from the analysis of labor as a producer of use values and the diversity of use values and the division of labor appears, what it is going to propose is that in this specific way that we are seeing in which the social division of labor is carried in the separation of social labor into private and independent labor, It is the interweaving of these private and independent labors that constitutes the whole process of social life. Private and independent work is intertwined with those who buy from it and those from whom it buys, and this extends until we are confronted with the unity of the process of social metabolism where each individual organ operates as a private organ, separate from the others.

Much later on there will appear a development regarding how the movement of social production and consumption is presented in the capitalist mode of production and why, being a unity (in any process of human metabolism the social character constitutes the unity of that process), when one looks at it it appears to spring from individual processes, it appears immediately as if it did not enclose that unity. but it seems to spring from the movement of things that are in themselves pure unity and that outwardly relate to other units that are also pure unity, each of them. When one meets the commodity-producer, one does not first see him as an individual organ of the process of social life, but as an isolated individual, and from his isolated movement the general unity seems to spring.

[Question about the form of equivalent and its "mysterious character"] [...] It seems that there is a use value that has the capacity to show that something other than a social use value is something else, that the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent has value. That is why the mysterious character: because it is a thing, it is not that *someone* says that it is a social use value, the one who proves it is not a person, it is a thing. How can a thing say what is useful or useless? If I look at it with my vulgar conscience, what I will see is this: there is something in that relationship that has the power to be changeable in a world of things that are not changeable.

[Ignacio asks him what he means by "vulgar conscience"] It is general consciousness, as opposed to scientific consciousness. It is a "practical" consciousness. Marx will use the term a lot, especially as "vulgar economics" = unscientific. It is what the commodity possessor or producer sees, what his consciousness puts before him: the practical movement of his social relation. Look and see this relationship of equality, that there is one thing that has the attribute of

saying that something materially different contains that attribute of changeability (those other 2 determinations are missing). In Volume 3, when one reads it, all the time there is a more or less explicit counterpoint between two courses that are being followed:

1) Scientific consciousness: Since we have already seen what the content of value is, why it has the form, we see that by this movement, this determination that it has here, appears erased. But we already know what's inside. The difference in content that was here has been removed, but it is inside even if it is manifested as erased. If one comes the other way around and did not begin with the simplest specific determination but with the immediate manifestation, and I begin to wonder about the content it has, for example with the problem of income distribution, and I stop when I see that this distribution is profits and wages and I have nothing more to ask myself... I, coming from the simplest determination and returning to the concrete, I know that profit and wages are not explained by profit and wages themselves, that they have a content that is totally the opposite of what appears, so I can explain why the distribution of income appears with the immediacy of the form of the confrontation between profit and wages.

2) Vulgar conscience: Anyone who comes the other way around and stops at this will seem to him that profit is explained by the monopoly power of certain capitalists, and wages by the combative spirit of the working class. We are both looking at the same thing, only that one unfolded the content until it reached its necessary concrete forms and the other started with the necessary concrete forms (it is not a fantasy) and when it reaches that height, as it has not advanced beyond that manifestation itself, if it stops at that manifestation, as Marx says, "everything appears inverted", as in the competition. The vulgar conscience is this, it arrives where everything is inverted and says: "this is how it is".

Scientific consciousness did all the analysis to arrive at the simplest specific form and now it is unfolding the need for that simpler determination under the concrete forms that are more and more developed and can account for what is within that phenomenon that it is looking at. So that is the difference between scientific and vulgar consciousness, which is the immediate awareness of what the immediate movement shows. It is not a fantasy about what is in front, what is in front is seen in this form, but its content is not known.

[They ask if this "vulgar consciousness" is what certain sectors of Marxism called "false consciousness"] Let's not mess with the "sectors of Marxism", let's simply call it "vulgar consciousness". Marx is going to make a difference at the end of this chapter in *political economy* (his book is called *Critique* of Political Economy). There are two ways of this:

1) Classical political economy, which still tries to explain what it is in front of it but which is going to clash with the determinations of which it is the bearer and is going to discover the content but will never be able to explain the form; he can understand the first two sections without reaching an in-depth

analysis of what is specific to commodity-producing labor. But he says: work is what is at stake here. What cannot be explained is that, since value is quantities of labour, it is not expressed in quantities of labour.

2) Vulgar economics contrasts with the first, it says that it "turns the thickest phenomenon into mush" and serves the ideological consumption of the bourgeoisie, which no longer asks itself what the content is. On the contrary: it tries *to hide* what the content is, and appeals to stop at the immediate appearance.

If one looks at that analysis that we had been deploying in the scheme with respect to the determination of the value of commodities, classical economics reached as far as labor. And Marx goes on to point out that they realized that this work already has this double character (he quotes Franklin), of concrete labor and human labor in general. He is acknowledging that they came to analyze this even though they could not discover this difference between abstract/concrete labor. What does neoclassical economics do? It has *to hide* the fact that work is the determinant of value, no matter whether with or without specificity, because that work, even if it is seen as natural, what it puts in front of it are antagonistic relations. So you have to make the relationship disappear. It is not that we have to discover something that classical economics did not discover. And for this, the analysis has to stop at the most immediate appearance (which is absolutely real, which one can take from reality).

What are we going to do with what neoclassical economics is going to call "budget constraint", [27]which for them is given by nature? We all do what they say explains what value is: if I have these and these needs, and this limited ability to satisfy them, I choose which one I am going to satisfy, what we are going to do with our "income". And he stops there and says that's what explains the changeability and the magnitude of change, and that none of us really have any relationship with anybody. If work confronted us with the fact that each one of us works for the others... Smith immediately discovers the relationship between buyer and seller of the commodity, and that one cannot appeal to the kindness of the baker, the butcher, etc. to be provided with these things, he has to appeal to his personal interest to satisfy his own interest, so he is declaring at the outset that this is a society where relations are antagonistic. Neoclassical economics has to say: no, this is a harmonious world. On what basis? That no one has a relationship with anyone, but with things: they choose their preferences and on the basis that they chose the preferences, from that the supply and demand curves are derived and each one maximizes their well-being according to their own choice. He is going to say openly that value is not an interpersonal relationship, but an intrapersonal one, of each one with things. So it's not that I have a good or bad relationship with others: I don't have a relationship with anyone. That is the role of vulgar economics. Then we will see other more complex roles.

[27] Later he explains it as a barrier to the fact that the human subject can never be completely satisfied, the total utility is always increasing, he can always go further without limit until he collides with the budgetary restriction.

So it is an appearance that is not a fantasy, it can be tested. One of the arguments of neoclassical economics in the face of this that we are developing is: this is what everyone does, where do you get that the problem has to do with work? And that it is a natural process because always, wherever there were human beings, they had to do this. Paul Samuelson, Nobel Prize in Economics, who was an authority on this economy until his death (although now it is a little more forgotten), writes an article saying: the rough and primitive state of the society of which Smith speaks, that of the caves, was a society "with a very high interest rate, because time was very scarce and then it was very expensive". One watching the Flintstones you can think that, that in that society there was an interest rate, but... That is vulgar economics in its fullness, but it has that basis: in all societies time matters, one chooses from time whether one wants to consume today or tomorrow... And that is the explanation for every form of society.

4. *The simple form of value, as a whole*.

We had the first characteristic of the equivalential form and this of the mysterious character. The observation that Marx is going to make is that the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent, which in order to be there has to be a use value, here has acquired a second attribute: it serves, in simple terms, to express the value of the other commodity. And Marx is going to put this that the canvas that is at the relative pole and expresses its value in 1 frock coat, the usefulness of the tailor's work does not consist in making suits and therefore men. Why? Because with his labor he is making a use-value that satisfies a consumption that is not simply animal, but properly human, a consumption of the product of human labor. When you work for others, what you are doing is producing others as human beings, because you are generating the conditions so that they can consume as human beings. But when the frock coat is going to be in the place of the equivalent, the work that the tailor did was not only to make that use-value that serves to reproduce human subjects, but he has produced a body that represents value in this exchange relation. And value is abstract socially necessary labour materialised in the commodity which is at the pole relative to the equivalent.

So, how does the tailor's work fulfill this function? The only thing that matters in the relation of exchange is that it expresses abstract labour, and it can fulfil this function because it is the product of a concrete labour different from that which produced the canvas. In the case of gnocchi and shoes, it is not kneading, but gluing sole, etc. So the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent has the power to represent the value and therefore the abstract social labor of the commodity that is at the relative pole. If at the pole of the equivalent there were the product of the same concrete labor that produced the commodity that is in the relative (10 Levites = 10 Levites), that labor that produced Levites is not giving its product the capacity to represent value. When there is 10 $VL = 1\ L$, the work of making the frock coat, because it is materially different from that which produced the poles of linen, acquires the capacity to represent value. So the second characteristic of the equivalent is that concrete labor is an expression of abstract labor: the body of the frock coat expresses value, the concrete labor of making the frock coat expresses abstract labor.

Why on earth does the concrete labor of making costumes have the capacity to generate a product that represents value and abstract labor when it is in the exchange relationship? Making frock coats is the same as making canvas, and yet in this relationship of exchange this work appears to contain an "unnatural" attribute that in turn generates it in its product. This abstract labor has a social character and has to make it manifest. What does it put it in? In the frock coat. And this is not the product of an immediately social labor: it is the product of private labor. The third characteristic of the equivalent will be that the private labor that produces the equivalent *expresses* directly social labor: it does not have to prove that it is useful. And yet it is the product of private labor. The mysterious character develops in: how is it possible that a private labor like any other, in this *and only in this* relationship, has the power to represent social labor? Where did he get that "advantage" that he has in this relationship of exchange over the one who made the canvas? Because the problem with the work that did the 10 *VLs* is that it has to prove that it is socially useful work. And on the other hand, the one who made the commodity in the pole of the equivalent does not have to prove anything: he is a representative of social labor.

Regarding the antitheses [in relation to a previous question], each of the things that are going to be expressed in the exchange relation are expressed in the opposite of what they are, in the commodity that functions as equivalent. Value is expressed in the form of a use-value. Abstract labor is expressed in the form of concrete labor. Social labor in the form of private labor. It's all the other way around. That is why it is the mysterious character. Marx goes on to say: the value of commodities can only be expressed in the form of exchange value. To the traditional language of economics that commodities "have use value and exchange value," what he is going to contrast is that the commodity only has exchange value when it is in the exchange relation with another. It cannot express its exchange value by itself. In reality it is not correct to say that it is use value and exchange value, but use value and value, but at the same time in order to express value the commodity must necessarily enter into an exchange relation to another.

The following points, before moving on to the unfolding of this simple relation [point 4], are going to be the following. That it is the substance of the value of commodities that explains exchange value and the magnitude of value, and not the other way around—that value and its magnitude can be explained through exchange value, the form that value takes. Later we will dwell on statements that in the name of Marx explain the value of commodities by exchange value, that because commodities are exchanged it means that they have value, and the magnitude of that value depends on the proportion in which they are exchanged, that is, that commodities are exchanged because they are exchanged. And Marx makes the opposite observation to this: it is in the character of value that it can only be expressed as exchange-value, but exchange-value cannot explain the substance of value.

[Javiera asks me to develop more about the "mysterious character"] [...] The work of a tailor creates that power. But why, if it is the same as the work of the weaver? There is nothing that obliges the other individual directly to accept that

tailoring has these attributes. And yet one looks at the weaver and the tailor and says: they both work privately. Why does the tailor's private labor have that power in this relationship? One might stop and say that it is that the work of tailors has this wonderful aptitude (the mysterious character). When Marx looks at money, it is also the product of private labor and has this power, and it seems natural.

Why is SNALdPaI represented as the value of commodities? Marx, when this unfolding is over, considers this question to be answered. The simple form of value is in which the antithesis use value/value is manifested, where the commodity that has to prove that it has value, only matters for its use value, which is what the one who is going to buy it wants to receive, and the one that serves to express its value that is the one who puts his body is only interesting as an expression of value. as exchange value.

Labor and its products are common to all forms of society. But the characteristic of commodities, of a historical epoch of the development of humanity, is that this expenditure of labor is represented as an attribute materialized in the product (its value). Since the determinations of the commodity already appear in the simple form of value, this simple expression corresponds to the simplest determination of the commodity. Therefore the development of the commodity coincides with the form of value. This is going to confront us with capital, with the historical development of the capitalist mode of production and with that which goes beyond the capitalist mode of production.

Then the discussion that I would leave raised appears, and it appeared in the first meeting of whether what Marx is putting here when he looks at this simple form of value (he calls it the "*fortuitous*" form of value, implying a certain accident in that determination of the proportion of exchangeability), if it is the historical origin of commodity production and therefore of the capitalist mode of production, whether this unfolding from the simple form to the unfolded form of value in the commodity corresponds to a historical process or simply to the unfolding of what one has ahead in the fullness of the development of the capitalist mode of production, what some call a "logical" development. I am not going to put it in those terms because there is no logic here, rather the accompaniment of the deployment of a power that is realized and when one sees it realized one says: and which powers are in turn enclosed under this concrete form? I look at it and it matters to me essentially as the unfolding of determination. We start with the question of our political action, not because of the historical origin of the commodity. And within this question of our political action appears the simplest form of value.

Today it is fashionable in these discussions to say that Marx at no time thought that this part was at least the historical development of the commodity (then there is a part where he speaks of historical development, but it is a commodity prior to the one we are looking at), and that this proposal of a capitalist mode of production springing from a simple production of commodities is an invention of Engels. In Volume 3, the drafts edited by Engels, the sentence is there (they say that Engels changed its place), and Marx says: the simple production of commodities (or something like that) is the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production. And at the end of Volume 1 this is said in all the letters: the

development of the simple form of value is the development of the commodity-form. The commodity becomes capital.

So, I can see in that the historical process or as a necessity for the development of the method of knowledge, but in the face of the proposals that say that Marx did not look at it in any way as a historical process... The phrase makes one doubt, because "fortuitous" means that the exchange of commodities is not developed, which is what will later appear more expressed. By accident they became the same. One cannot pretend that Marx did not say that this *can also* be the accompaniment of the historical genesis of *the capitalist mode of production*, not the historical genesis of the commodity proper to the capitalist mode of production.

B. TOTAL OR UNFOLDED FORM OF VALUE

z commodity A = *u* commodity B, o = commodity value circulation, o = *w* commodity money, o = *x* commodity E, etc.

(20 *VL* = 1 frock coat, or = 10 pounds of tea, or = 40 pounds of coffee, o = 1 *quart* of wheat, or = 2 ounces of gold, or = 1/2 ton of iron, etc.)[28]

1. *The relative form of value displayed*.

The simple form shows its limitation as an expression of value. If what is at issue is that the commodity passed from one pole to another, that the commodity expresses its value (which is the product of social labor), and only does so against another particular commodity, proved that it has value against that one, but what about the others can it prove the same or not? So what is going to appear is that what A has to prove is that it is exchangeable for *any other* commodity that is in the place of the equivalent. Then a development appears that is formal from the outset (this form has this limitation and then I unfold it). And what is the unfolding of that, it is the simple expression repeated with respect to all the other commodities that are in circulation, and now that commodity is going to be proving that it is the product of SNALdPaI against any other concrete form of SNALdPaI, that it is capable of putting itself in a relation of exchange with all the others. that function like their equivalents. The only one that cannot be in this unfolding is the same commodity that is expressing its value because it cannot express it in its own body.

What is going to appear is that the social character of the labour which produced the commodity which is at the relative pole is expressed in quantities of the body of another commodity. And they are all valid expressions of the value of the commodity that is at the relative pole. That value has different expressions in the different commodities that are going to act as equivalents, it has a multiplicity of expressions. When we started it seemed that there could not be something common because there is a multiplicity of expressions, but if there was a relationship of equality there had to be. Now what is expressed is: (1) that there is

[28] Marx, K., *Capital* (1977: 28), Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

no longer a fortuitous character because it is expressing its changeability in all other commodities, and (2) that the magnitude of the value of the commodity is not governed by the process of exchange but is now embodied in the developed relative expression of the value of the commodity, it is taking shape that this commodity has a certain magnitude of value and that it is expressed through its different exchange values.

2. *The particular form of equivalent*.

Marx told us: commodities are telling us the same thing that we had discovered by analyzing them in their own language, that of movement in exchange. In the unfolding of exchange, the commodity is showing us that if it can be equalized with different proportions of all the other commodities, it has a common attribute with all but that it also has a magnitude that is independent of its expression with all, but it is the other way around: that same magnitude has different expressions *because it is not* the other way around. the different commodities which act as equivalents are the product of different quantities of SNALdPaI, different unit quantities of that commodity contain different quantities of abstract labour. So we are going to have expressed in the change this double condition.

3. *Deficiencies in the total or unfolded form of value*.

What is going to happen to this expression? Each use-value of commodities acting as an equivalent constitutes an equivalent acting in its own exchange relation. It is a concrete, determinate equivalent, with a specific form, each one is a special equivalent. The way in which the commodity that is at the relative pole can express that it is the product of simple human labor in general, is by entering into the exchange relation not with a particular commodity or some, but with all. Then each special equivalent appears as a partial expression of this condition of product of human labor in general that the one at the relative pole has. There is no complete, unique way through which the commodity is expressing that it is exchangeable for any other commodity because it is the product of a work qualitatively equal to that which there is in certain quantities of any other commodity.

Marx proposes a new step of formal deployment: if we turn the relation upside down, it appears that all commodities except one express their value in quantities of the use value of *a single commodity*, and therefore the social character of labor has *a single expression*. Each expression of simple value is the same as any other expression of the simple value and therefore the value in this form has a general expression. Now what is going to appear is: the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent of all the others, is going to function as a general equivalent.

[Replying to Juliana] There is no logical deployment here. Logic is a constructive necessity that is external to the object that one is confronting with thought. And here there is no that. Here is a display of what one is seeing. One sees commodities in exchange, analytical development ended at point 2 with the analysis of

commodity-producing labor, the discovery of the substance of value. And then comes the question of how this substance is expressed. What is being done is a description of how it is manifested. With the commodity isolated, I can't see if it has value or not. Where did I find it when I started? He expressed it in the exchange rate. When I look at that simple expression, I see that I am not exhausted by the capacity of commodities to express their value. So I have to do the development of the relative form of value. Looking at it I have a problem, because all commodities have to be there, and each one appears in this particular relation in which it acts as an equivalent, in the others there is not this capacity to represent the value of these commodities. The full expression of this is that all commodities express their value in one of them alone, acting as a general equivalent.

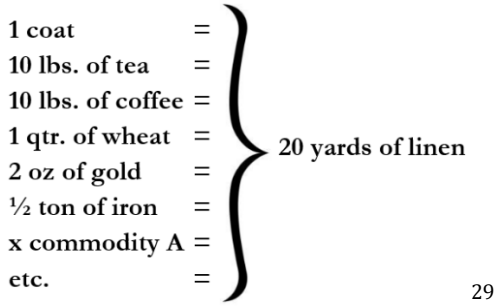
There is no logical constructive need to say: I have to lift the assumption that this simple expression here must be extended. Nowhere do I have an assumption of the simple expression, which is the manifestation by which the value of any commodity appears in the process of exchange. What there is is that deployment of the powers that what one is seeing has. I don't know if I would associate a logical construction with a Kantian construction, but a Hegelian one. One of Marx's criticisms of Hegel very early on is that one cannot be applying general necessity, pretending to find general necessity, in all concrete forms. What we have to look for (Marx is still going to use the term "logic") is the movement of that concrete that one has in front of one and not apply the universality of "dialectical logic" to each concrete that is in front of him.

Each one has to confront for himself the movement of the real unfolding of his subjectivity, and when one asks about one's subjectivity one confronts the commodity in the capitalist mode of production. With which he uses the text of *Capital* to be able to develop a process that from the social point of view is one of recognition. One individually makes a process of original knowledge or reproduces one's own knowledge later, but socially one will be able to develop one's original knowledge using as a tool that objectified deployment (it has a socially appropriable form) that Marx made, but one will be subjecting it to criticism all the time. And if one does not find the same thing that Marx finds, what one should not do is say: "What one finds is different from what Marx found... but it is what Marx meant", I cannot say: "Since it is Marx, I am going to put aside what I found", because at that moment I destroyed the deployment of determinations, I turned it into a representation: I believe what Marx tells me and I am going to accept it. That use as a process of recognition, helps me to look at the capitalist mode of production, its simplest determinations (which are not logical), it is the reality of the capitalist mode of production in its simplest form.

Facing this form of political action that for me is the workshop, I cannot say: "That part that I see that is in Marx, but that does not serve me, I am going to erase it," which would be intellectually dishonest. So I make the observation. One can face it as a development of a historical character, and in defense of what appears in the text and what Engels did with the text, in particular in Volume 3 (which seems to me to have done an extraordinary job), it is now said that he rewrote the book,

that he distorted the original... I take care to emphasize this other aspect, which is an axis that one can follow and that Marx claims in his development.

C. GENERAL FORM OF VALUE



29

1. *Modified nature of the form of value*.

We took the simple form and what we discovered, looking at how it operates, was: the commodity that enters the exchange relation enters to express that it has value, that it is the product of a SNALdPaI. If we look at the expression of value (exchange ratio) we see that it is expressed in quantities of use-values. When I continue to look at the unfolding of this exchange value, I say: the commodity at the relative pole entered to prove that it is the product of human labor in general, and it proves it in relation to other commodities that are the product of a different concrete labor. And to prove that it is socially *useful work* (that it is made for others) it does so in the product of a work that outside of that relationship does not have the attribute of representing social labor; it is a private labor, but that within that relationship, since it does not have to prove that it has value because it is the expression of the value of the other, it appears as if from its condition of private labor arises this attribute of being immediately exchangeable for that which is in the equivalent.

What does this show? It is a limited expression. I see that a commodity shows me that it has value in this particular case. How can you show me that you have value beyond this circumstance? It is placed in a relation of exchange with all other commodities, in a proportion that always corresponds to the quantity of units that is at the relative pole. Since the others are different use-values, it depends on how much labor was expended, it says how many units of the other are needed for the first to express its value. Now he is showing me, not circumstantially, but fully, that the labor produced by commodity A is socially useful because it is capable of putting itself in a relation of exchange with all the others.

When I look at that expression, what I'm going to have is: okay, that's how it expresses it, but that expression manifests itself in special equivalents, and therefore this expression displayed here does not have a simple expression. The

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[29] *Capital* (1977: 31), Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

simple one will be when all commodities express their value in the same one: *A* will represent all the forms of labor that were done in society. I could have the unfolded expression of the relative value of one commodity in all the others, and next to it put the relative expression of the value of the second in all the others, and the third... Thus the one that was relative in the first is equivalent in the others. And there I would have the universe of the expression that all the labor that is materialized in all commodities is socially useful labor, they are all proving that they have value. But it would have as many developed expressions of value as there are commodities in society. There is a simple way to express this and that is that there is a general equivalent: instead of many particular equivalents for a single relative expression, what I have is many relative expressions with a single equivalent. If this thing, which is the commodity of the equivalent pole, has the attribute of representing social labour done privately and independently, now that this commodity fulfils the role of the general equivalent, the whole representation of social labour is synthesized in it.

A clarification: up to here it is any commodity. And it will begin to look at concrete development in a historical unfolding because it will arrive at a certain form. And he is going to raise, partly in this chapter and especially in the second, why this function of equivalent is acquiring a concrete form, depositing itself on a concrete use value and how its role is going to be expressed when it is fixed on that particular use value, that which represents social labor done privately and independently is going to acquire a full expression. So far what has appeared is that it can be in the body of any commodity, one can put any commodity in the pole of the general equivalent. There is no general equivalent in the abstract. What is not yet established is the function of the general equivalent in a particular commodity. Then it will be displayed why it needs to settle and why in a particular commodity and what attributes this commodity must have to fulfill that role (it will appear in chapter II). Whenever one speaks of a general equivalent it is a concrete commodity, it *can never be labor*. Socially necessary abstract labour is the *substance* of value, but the problem is that this can never be expressed by itself, it can only be expressed as exchange value in quantities of the physical, material body, of whatever commodity it is, a given use-value.

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2. *Developmental relationship between the relative form of value and the form of equivalent.*[30]

[...] A reference appeared to the fact that the simple form of value, the expression of the value of X in the use-value of Y, is already present in very primitive times, when there were only occasional, circumstantial changes. The developed form of value only manifests itself when there is any commodity (Marx is going to put the cattle) that is exchanged *in a normal way* with the others. I would like to clarify this observation. The form may be manifested in that primitive expression. But the content of the determination of value in that simple expression does not have the content that we knew until now to the commodity, in that way

[30] I place it here because it is not clear how cut, or if it even refers to subsection 2.

that we are knowing until now. And even when this developed form appears, which begins to appear when there is already a commodity that is systematically taking the place of the equivalent, it may be that the changeability of commodities does not have the content that we discover analytically and that is now becoming manifest in the unfolding of the form of value. It is an observation that Marx makes there that has an external character, one cannot think that in that original simple form there was necessarily this content that we are looking at here.

With that caveat, we continue with the form of the general equivalent. When we look at it from the determinations of the changeability of the commodity that we knew analytically, it appears that this commodity that functions as a general equivalent begins to distinguish itself from the rest of the commodities because it is acting as an expression of the value of all of them. Just as it differs from the others because they all express value in this commodity, so by "transitive character" all commodities are related to the mediation of the general equivalent. A commodity proves with respect to another that it is a carrier of value because both express their condition of value in the general equivalent. What appears here above all is a formal mediation of the general equivalent. But the determination of the content of that equivalent is going to be marked in what follows.

Which commodity plays the active role in this development of the expression of value, and which one passively fulfills its role? What makes one commodity the general equivalent is the movement of the other commodities. It does not occupy the active place, but passively reflects the value of others. So it is the movement of all commodities expressing their value in a single one that separates that commodity from the others, differentiated in its condition as a general equivalent. Consequently, the expression of the social character of labor, which has a unique form and consequently a general character, has as a condition for fulfilling this role that it is socially recognized in this role.

This character will be expressed in the fact that the movement of all the other commodities separates this one and gives it the role of being immediately exchangeable for any other, and consequently immediately representative of the social labor carried out privately and independently. All other commodities must enter into exchange relation to this general equivalent in order to prove that they have value, they are not immediately exchangeable. We started with a private and independent social labor, which is an "expression" of the impossibility of immediate changeability – it has to be proof that it is changeable – and of the unfolding of that situation in which no commodity can be immediately exchangeable because it would imply that just by looking at it one is seeing value, what we see is that with the development of the form of value there is a commodity that just by looking at it one sees social labor, it is immediately changeable by the others.

If this form of the general equivalent is consolidated in a commodity, this commodity is socially recognized as value even outside the exchange relation. Now we see that there is a commodity that can do this, but not by itself, but thanks to the movement of the others. You don't have to prove that you have value: it represents value. This EG-commodity manifests that it has value, what it cannot do

is express the *magnitude* of its own value, for that you have to turn the relationship around. And if one wants to maintain the evidence that this commodity is the general equivalent, one has to express its value relatively in the body of the other commodities. If a commodity expresses its value in the body of all the others and is recognized as a general equivalent, we can know the magnitude of its value. Seen alone, we know that PaISL represents, value, but we don't know how much. No commodity can have this attribute, it cannot express the magnitude of its value, although it can express the value of the other.

One more clarification. What logical representation is going to say is: I have a model built on the basis of those attributes that are always repeated. So I have simplifying assumptions that are going to leave me with only those attributes, and on top of them I'm going to build the concept of this that I have in front of me. And from that concept, from this simple model, I have to raise the simplifying assumptions and see if as I move towards more concrete forms, with more determinations present, what was verified in the simple model continues to be verified. If, when I go ahead and raise the simplifying assumptions, the more concrete model contradicts the simple model, I have two alternatives: 1) Or I say that the simple model is trivial, it only works for those more general assumptions but not for the concrete model; or 2) what I had affirmed in the simple model with respect to concrete is simply false.

What we did was to start from a situation in which we said: no commodity can be immediately exchangeable, express that it has value. For that he needs to be in a relationship of exchange with another. And now what we arrive at in development is that because each commodity needs to be in exchange relation to another in order to express its value, it is that one of them is separated to fulfill the function of the general equivalent and consequently does not have to prove that it has value. They are two completely different ways of moving forward: in one, if we arrive at the opposite of what we started, we say that the starting point was false. In the other we say: it is thanks to this starting point that we can find that under the concrete forms this contradiction between the private and the social character of labor unfolds to the point where there is a commodity that in itself is the bearer of the full unfolding of this contradiction: it is the product of private labor but represents social labor. All the time we will be seeing this unfolding, that the concrete form is presented to us as the opposite of the starting point. And that does not invalidate this point, on the contrary: it shows us that in order to arrive at this concrete form we needed to start from that simpler form, and that only in this way can we come to unfold the determinations of the concrete form.

We are still in this situation in which there is a concrete form of private labour which represents the social character of labour and the abstract character of labour, and that consequently, in the expression of the value of all commodities in the body of the latter, what we have shown is that all the labour which has produced the other commodities has the same attribute as the labour which is in the commodity of the general equivalent, that the work that is in the M-EG is an expression of human social labor in general. Marx states that he no longer represents it simply as abstract labor as lacking in quality, but represents it as an expenditure of human labor power, physiological expenditure of the human body,

as we have seen. Now Marx shows that it is manifested in the exchange relation of all commodities with which it occupies the place of the general equivalent. And one remembers again what he said, that now commodities are telling us by themselves in their movement what we had previously discovered by analysis. The question arises again that it seems that the form of the equivalent is now the bearer of the determinations of the value of commodities. Marx remarks again: *it is the other way around*, it is from the development of the relative forms of value that the form of the general equivalent springs.

3. *Transition from the general form of value to the form of money*.

Here Marx goes a step further and says: up to this point we are talking about the form of the general equivalent that fell on any commodity. We made a formal development as to how we unfolded the relative form from the simple form of value, how that was reflected in the form of the equivalent, but any commodity could have been separated from all the others as equivalent. When this process reaches its own development, this condition of the equivalent comes to a definite commodity which represents the value of all commodities and occupies *not formally but really the place of the general equivalent*. In the development of the process of commodity exchange, it comes to occupy this place and is socially recognized as *the only one* that can occupy that place, and what we are going to have is a commodity that is going to fulfill the *function* of money and that historically in the development of the movement of commodities that role fell to gold.

D. FORM OF MONEY[31]

20 yards of linen	=	2 ounces of gold
1 coat	=	
10 lbs. of tea	=	
10 lbs. of coffee	=	
10 lbs. of tea	=	
½ ton of iron	=	
x commodity A	=	
etc.	=	

So, we're going to have the consolidated form of the general equivalent. And the simple relative expression of the value of all other commodities in which it functions as money is the price-form of the value of the commodity. Gold, like any other commodity, cannot express the magnitude of its own value because it acts as a general consolidated equivalent, as money. The labor that extracts the gold is the

[31] *Capital* (1977: 35), Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

socially necessary abstract labor that is going to be represented as the value of gold, and it is the quantity of that labor that is going to determine how much value there is in a certain amount of gold. The problem is that if I look at that isolated amount of gold I don't know what the magnitude of that value is. If I want to know and still have evidence that this is the general equivalent, socially recognized as money, I have to put the relative expression of the value of 1 ounce of gold in all special equivalents = all other commodities, there is no other way in which I express the magnitude of their value.

We started with the exchange value, we moved on to the value, we returned to the exchange value, and now we have the price. Each of these three names corresponds to different determinations. In classical and neoclassical economics these 3 terms appear *indistinctly*, as if they were synonymous. Here what we have to look at is this, in summary:

- Value is socially necessary abstract labor that materialized in its product in a private and independent way and that is represented as the social attribute that this product has of being a changeable object, of relating to others who have this same attribute in exchange. It cannot be expressed immediately as value, only in the relation of exchange to another, except when one looks at money, although one cannot express the magnitude of its own value.

- Exchange value is the expression of that attribute of changeability, a way of expressing the value (content) of the commodity.

- Price is the exchange value of the commodity (expression of its value) in money. It is the general expression of the value of commodities, it acts as a general equivalent, it is immediately exchangeable for all the others.

I see the gold, the money, and what I see is social labor. I see any commodity *outside of an exchange relationship* and what I see are products of private labor that have to prove that they are indeed the product of social labor. Commodities are the product of social labour at the moment they are produced. Value is finished work, materialized in the commodity; it no longer exists in activity: it was objectified. Consequently, nothing can happen to work in the process of change, because it has already happened. What we have in front of us is: work is socially useful or useless at the moment it is being done. If it was done in a socially useful way, the work will materialize in its product as its value. If it was socially useless, when it wants to enter into an exchange relationship with another commodity or with money, since it does not have this social attribute that is value, it will rebound, it will not be able to enter into the exchange relationship. The exchange relation *shows* whether the attribute exists, which *does not arise from the exchange relation.*

It is obvious that [it cannot happen that] something that yesterday was not the product of social labor, suddenly today is, or that yesterday it was and today it is not. There were products that wanted to be a commodity, but they were not. The question is whether it was useful or not is going to manifest itself in whether or not it enters the exchange relationship. Thanks to the fact that I had value, because I

left the production process carrying this social attribute, I was able to relate to this other one that represents value, social labor. The attribute manifests itself in exchange because the labor that produces commodities is private, where its producer has full control over the concrete form he gave to the expenditure of his general capacity to work without the intervention of those for whom the product of that labor is intended, and it is those others who have to say whether *he made* the product. a socially useful work or not, and the indirect way in which this is going to be said is not a personal attribute of anyone, but through the exchange relation.

As a private and independent producer I have full control over my individual work, I have to give a concrete form to the general productive expenditure of my body and I produce a bed. I take the bed into circulation and another possessor of commodities, or money in this case, appears, and confirms to me that I applied my labor privately in a socially necessary way (done under normal conditions and useful to others). When someone gives me the money in exchange for my bed, they are telling me that it is useful to that individual. Now, I make beds and I say: this society is full of fakirs, so I'm going to make beds with nails because I'm sure there's a need. I was working putting nails everywhere. I put it into circulation and there is no fakir willing to buy it. So all the work I did was done in a concrete way that was of no use to anyone. Therefore my work was socially useless from the moment of production. If you look at it and say: "because you change it has value..." it does it the other way around, instead of explaining the exchange by value. There are a series of proposals with a lot of presence within Marxist political economy in which this inversion appears.

[They ask what happens to exchange relations that are not exchanged for any price] I may have produced a bed for myself, a use-value, and I don't have to prove that it's useful work because it's for me, it's individual work. In order to produce a commodity I must have produced a use-value for someone other than me (social labour). Here the problem I have is that I do social labor but independently of the recipient of my work: then I don't know if it is useful or not for him until you enter into the relationship of change.

[They ask about "unpaid" domestic work.] The product of domestic work within the family bond is the product of social labor, because one person in the family group works for another person in the family group. But it is not a work in which the producer has full control over his work: he organizes it because he has a bond of personal dependence on the recipient of his work: there is no private labor. Many times there are approaches in Marxist political economy that stop where they say that value is abstract socially necessary labor and that's it. In fact, Marx in development makes this statement, but after having said that it was *carried out privately and independently.* When we came to abstract labor, we needed to find a quality that is present in the labor that produces commodities and not in the labor that does not produce them. And we said: the one who performs it has full control over his individual work *because he is the owner of his means of production,* he solves what, how he is going to produce (how much is not yet present, but also). His conscience and his will, independently of any other individual, organizes the work.

What happens in things that are not commodities and are products of socially necessary abstract labor? They are made for others, but the producer does not have this full control because he is directly linked as an attribute of his person to the person *with* whom or *for* whom he is going to work. There is no exchange relationship, but the production of use values from one person to another in directly social labor . The moment it is organized, it is known that it is intended for X individual and that it is useful for that individual. [...][32] In a bond of friendship it happens as with domestic work. You don't expect to be given something in return, you have a personal bond. One is not a personally free individual in relation to one's friends, one's family, in the capitalist mode of production, one is bound. As a producer of commodities it is irrelevant whether or not one has personal ties, it plays no role. The commodity producer performs his work privately and independently, and it is in this sense that he is a free individual.

[They ask what happens if one has personal ties with one's employer] My pattern is even impersonal, because my condition as a university professor... My boss has representatives, but he is not even a person. Now: when you have personal ties with your employer, you are a slave to your employer. And so far we do not speak of these personal ties, because in the production of commodities they are irrelevant. As a salaried worker, one does not have ties of personal dependence on the employer, what one has is an indirect link established through an exchange of commodities, which up to now is very far from having seen what the commodity that one sells is. We cannot answer at this point why this is a commodity nor do we have it in front of us. But it is clear that in that relationship one has no personal ties. It has its advantages: the boss cannot hit you, but it has the disadvantage that he can throw you out without remorse. If what mediates is a relationship of exchange there is no personal dependence, it is about two individuals who work for each other privately and independently.

What follows is what form the consciousness of the commodity producers takes: if this is their general social relation, this is their social being, what form does this social being take in the consciousness of the commodity producers? We are still missing point 4 [fetishism]. But I wanted to make this observation to you.

With this development that we have made so far, Marx clarifies the 2 questions we had[33]. Compared to versions prior to development (there are even differences between the 1st and 2nd editions of *Capital*[34]), Marx added more explanations, including why work when carried out privately and independently is represented as value. This was linked to the fact that the commodities are telling us with their movement what they had already told us when we analysed them: they are the product of SNALdPaI. What I usually propose in all workshops, since it is not clear that one has the full deployment of the answer to these questions, is to start again with the question of the value of commodities, but not from the simplest form that

[32] We resume after a connection cut.

[33] 1) Why is it that when socially necessary abstract labor is performed in a private and independent way, its materialization in its product is represented as the value of the product, its attribute of changeability? 2) Why is it that if value is quantities of labor it can never be expressed in quantities of labor?

[34] Which is the one that, except for a series of additions by Engels on the basis of a copy of Marx with notes of things to be changed, is the definitive version.

social wealth has in the capitalist mode of production (the commodities themselves) but from the simplest form that the process of human life has. what the process of social metabolism is and how its unity is established, and then look at it in concrete forms; part of those concrete forms that Marx is going to mention in the section on fetishism, and what difference the capitalist mode of production has with respect to the previous ones and what is at stake with the form of value that the products of labor have.

If what one is going to look at in the capitalist mode of production is what happens to the social being of individuals, that social being has its specificity given not by the simple production of commodities but by the *capitalist* production of commodities. When we look at the simple form of commodity production, which is the simplest form presented to us by social labour carried out privately and independently, we look at what is needed of labour, what happens to the productivity of labour and the expression of value when that productivity changes. And it does not appear again in Volume 1. And every time he starts he will say: money has a value that is given (considering that it does not change the productivity of the labor that produces gold), in order to be able to look at the purity of the movements that occur at the relative pole. Here there are very simple and general developments of labor: it is the material productive expenditure of the human body carried out in a specific useful form. How is this work organized? Privately and independently. But what is going to be at stake is not simply the social labor Private and independent, but it is labor in the fully developed concrete form of labor governed by capital, so let us stop at the concrete determinations of the materiality of labor: what role do tools, consciousness, etc. play.

[Responding to Javiera about why start with the issue of the materiality of work] Why do I put all this in front of me? This is why the "circulationists" restate with different versions that since abstract labor is not a material expenditure of the human body, that the value or specificity of commodities is not that they are produced by private labor but that it is abstract labor with different definitions. And since this is what universally dominates in the world of Marxist political economy, which speaks of abstract labor not having a material character, that it is a historical social existence (contrary to what Marx says, which is common to all forms of society), for me it becomes necessary. When one goes to a congress where this issue is going to be discussed, one has to start by saying: Abstract labor is a physiological expenditure of the human body, therefore it is common to all forms of society, but when it is done privately and independently, its materiality in the product is represented as the social attribute of value. If one does not make this clarification, everyone thinks that abstract labor is something that is in the consciousness of the producer, that it is historically specific to the capitalist mode of production, etc. In the face of that, to the generality of someone who wonders about Marx's developments and faces the proposals by saying that Marx meant this, when he literally says things that contradict him, then they leave Marx as incoherent.

In the face of this, I consider it necessary to start by looking at the materiality of work, what abstract labor is and what is at stake when one speaks of value: that it is not an abstract problem of consciousness, it is not an abstract social relation, but

that it is the bearer of the organization of the unity of the process of social metabolism when social labor is done privately and independently. What is at stake is how social labor is assigned to each producer, the concrete form he is going to give to the expenditure of labor power that he carries in his person. But it is not explicit in that form, and what I propose is to make it explicit: what is organizing work? What is the nature of work from a material point of view? How is the assignment to each individual of what useful work he is going to do and what use-values produced by other individuals are he going to be assigned to consume? How does each of the individuals govern their action as subjects of social production and consumption? And then we are going to see that there is a material problem: of assigning the materiality of labor in the form of its general capacity to work and in its concrete form of useful labor applied to this or that production. And that this is resolved in the capitalist mode of production through the representation of labor as the value of the commodity, which is what is resolved through giving the product of social labor the form of a commodity. Linked to this appears to me the need today that one cannot wait to look at some questions about the materiality of work, that one must start with those questions.

Arturo: A definition I had of abstract labor at the university is given by Eric Wolf[35]. He says that abstract labor is typical of capitalism because the market is a great equalizer of different jobs. So the same market mechanism makes it so that the difference between different jobs that could not be equated before is lost, and that abstract labor would be the measurement of those jobs. I don't know if you heard that definition or something similar.

JIC: Yes, that's the one we're going to look at. If we look at different authors, they are all variants of a single author, they have the same source.

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[35] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Wolf

[Recommencement of development: from the simplest determination of the human life process to the commodity.]

We set out to look again at this, that Marx makes clear the determinations of why when work is done privately and independently, its materialization in its product is represented as value, and at the same time why, if the substance of value is quantities of labor, it can never be expressed in quantities of that substance. Because Marx is not going to return to this question. In the chapter on the fetish of the commodity there will be some indirect reference, it will make a comparison with other forms of organization of the life of society and it will refer to this.

That is why I always propose this alternative: to look at development again, but not starting with the commodity, but the other way around, reaching the commodity[36]. Let us begin with the simplest specific determination of the human life process, even of the condition of living subject, the simplest determination of human subjectivity. [Repeat what a subject is, human metabolism, etc.] → limited expenditure of the body whose purpose is not *to really appropriate* the environment but to spend it in order to *virtually appropriate* the environment = to know the powers that one has as a subject with respect to the powers offered by the environment and to realize those of the environment. This clashes with the conception in our society between knowing/acting. I put knowledge as the starting point of action. And while this process of appropriation is taking place, the subject is transforming the environment and at the same time himself; therefore, knowledge has to extend throughout the process. For simplicity's sake, I tend to put it as a starting point, but it takes place throughout the subject's action, which includes the reproduction of his own body.

We are looking at the process of human metabolism, a concrete form of existence of matter. If we speak of a concrete form, it means that matter contains potentialities, and therefore potentiality is an attribute of matter as such. Potentialities are not only in the subject, but in the objects, animate or inanimate, on which a subject is going to act. If what the living subject is going to appropriate does not contain the potentialities of becoming part of the body of the living subject, it is impossible for him to appropriate it. If the object is another living subject, it has its potentialities as a living subject, that second subject is an object from the point of view of the subject from which we start (e.g., the anteater eats living subjects that are ants, as objects that contain the nutritive potentialities to reproduce its body). If the subject recognizes that the medium serves him to reproduce, he launches the action to *really appropriate* the medium.

Subjects need to expand their capacity to appropriate the environment. If a species does not develop this capacity, it is enough for its environment to change so that it cannot reproduce. Stopping at properly human forms, the human being spends his body to transform the environment and appropriate the product of that transformation: work. The specifically human way of developing the capacity to appropriate the environment is the development of the productive forces of labor. What is the most general way to develop them? The production of means of

[36] JIC warns that it is going to be repeated, it is like in session 9.

production, spending the body productively in order to transform the environment not into means of subsistence but into means of production produced that are used to act again on the environment and produce means of production, until producing a means of life that does reproduce a human body.

If we return to the other determination proper to living subjects, it is what happens to human knowledge, to the capacity to govern the expenditure of the body. The human begins as an animal knowledge that when one speaks of an incipient "human being" is distinguished by the fact that its production of means of production is more developed than any other animal species, and that as the vocational training of work multiplies and the starting point of each cycle of human life is increasingly distant from the point of arrival (an increasingly greater mediation, a longer separation in time from the moment it starts until it has a means of living), human knowledge is going to have to extend until it reaches a point (it is a way of speaking) where the organization of the process of human metabolism is so extensive and complex that the knowledge that governs that organization develops as conscious knowledge. It is no longer the most developed animal knowledge, but a fully human knowledge, this qualitative difference appears from the knowledge that knows that what it is doing is knowing, organizing the process of human life. Now it has the form of a voluntary action as it is governed in a conscious way. We have not yet spoken of how this consciousness is determined.

I forgot to mention in previous meetings the other thing that contrasts with what I proposed, which is the general conception in our society about this need to transform living subjects, to develop their capacity to appropriate the environment. Even current scientific knowledge tells us that nothing can have a potentiality to be realized that it has not already manifested itself as realized, and only in this way can one know objectively, and that any transformation that occurs on any object — there is no possibility that there is a subject in this because it would imply that it has a potentiality pending realization in its current existence — must come from an external movement. spring from an external determination.

[Question about the unity of metabolism, the part of the action in which one knows and which launches the action are analytically separated, but in reality one is always acting and that is why one is always governing the action.]

The simply animal way of advancing for the ability to appropriate the environment is "centered," it has the general form, of a mutation of the body. Now, this process of transformation of the human environment is full of mutations. The capacity for conscious thought, the collective combination of the labor process that depends on a development of the glottis with capacities very limited to one capable of emitting a great diversity of sounds. The word is the way of objectifying, externalizing conscious thought for others and coordinating the collective action of those individuals. And this is one of the conditions for the development of conscious knowledge. The ability of fine motor skills to be able to write is also one of the ways in which the human organism mutates as a result of the fact that it is advancing in the development of the productive forces of work: oral communication is not enough, it needs a communication that has an objectified

existence independent of the individual who emits it. The human being develops his hands together with his brain in such a way that he can write.

We are mutating all the time, only here the mutation arises as a consequence of the development of the productive forces of labor, and in the case of animal species, this is practically not seen even though they also have it, and what is immediately seen is the mutation of the body. A series of mutations appear that appear as losses of animal attributes: the potentiality of their smell, which appears as a condition for being able to... productive forces of a labor process that has the character of being a massively collective process and that requires the immediate coexistence between individuals who with animal smell would not put up with each other.

When work is organized consciously and voluntarily, and we already have this differentiation of human labor with respect to any merely animal productive activity. What we found is that each human generation develops its life from a world that has been transformed by the conscious and voluntary work of the previous generation. So we had that the human being is the subject of his own history, he produces himself consciously and voluntarily. The human race is a historical subject. When we asked ourselves about the meaning of what we are doing here, it is a question that refers to this condition of historical subject, whether one consciously knows that one is the bearer of this determination or stops at the appearance that this determination does not exist, what one is doing with one's action is producing the generation that follows and always consciously and voluntarily. And how is our conscience and our will concretely determined? To advance in this question now in the development of the human metabolism carried out in the work we are looking at, we have to look at what work is and how its social character is organized.

We have already seen this from Marx's development: it is the expenditure of capacity to work, the productive expenditure of the body carried out in a definite useful concrete form. We can say that the process of human metabolism starts with work (although it is really a continuum). The first thing that comes to mind when one looks at it is that it is an individual activity, the one who works productively spends his own body. Therefore the productive forces of individual labour are carried in the person of the individual who is working. I am going to take an external expression: someone can work for another, but that someone spent his body productively and the other did not. If one looks at how those productive forces that individual has come to that individual that he has in his body, if we look at how that individual performs his work we are going to find, we are going to see that he has them as a consequence of having consumed the product of the work of other individuals. And we had already seen that when we spoke of a job in which an individual spends his body so that another appropriates the product of that expenditure, we were talking about social labor. The individual who works does so by cooperating with other individuals, and the productive forces that are put into operation are not only individual, but at the same time have a social character.

If one works for oneself, one is producing oneself as a human being: one is creating the conditions to be able to consume something that is a properly human use value, the product of human labor. But if one works producing a use-value

which one is going to consume individually, one's labour has a simply individual character. If someone works producing a use value for another person, his work has a social character and he is not simply producing that use value but the other individual who is going to consume that use value as a human being, he creates the conditions so that the other individual can carry out the consumption that is proper to the human being. We said it with the tailor: by producing frock coats (a social use value) he is producing other individuals as human beings.

If we look at work as the "opening" of the process of each human life cycle, what we have is this double character of work, necessarily individual and social at the same time. Work carries the unity of this double determination. If we, abstractly separating the unity of each cycle of human metabolism, now look at consumption, it is first of all an activity of an individual character. I cannot consume if I have not appropriated the object that is useful for reproducing myself, whether it is a means of production to use productively, or a means of life for reproducing myself. Consumption is necessarily an individual activity, and vice versa: someone can consume what was for another, one consumed and the other did not. This is what Marx remarked when he said: in order to consume one must materially appropriate the use value. What does one consume? First of all, the products of social labor, the work that others do. But also since one is an individual organ of a process of social metabolism, each individual consumes what is necessary to reproduce it as a productive organ for others. Put in an externality (because I think this has already passed into history), when political economy was studied at university there was a subject called "Theory of production, distribution and consumption" that was supposed to confront the unity of the process of human metabolism although it fragmented it into these parts, how each cycle begins and ends. I lack distribution.

I go backwards on one thing: when one is producing, at the same time one is consuming means of production to reproduce oneself or produces for others. It's not that it's just spent. To simplify it a lot, one can say: metabolism starts with pure production and closes with pure consumption (although in production there is consumption and in consumption there is production). If we return to the unity of this process of human life, the productive forces of labor are now the productive forces of *social* labor, however much they may be carried in individuals. In simple terms, if action began with its organization, each cycle of human life begins with the organization of work.

And when we look at it, what we have in front of us is: society materially has a certain amount of capacity to work, a certain labor power, carried in the body of the productive individuals of that society. The problem of organizing each cycle of the process of metabolism that starts from labor is to assign to each *productive* member of society what concrete useful work he is going to perform as an organ of the process of social metabolism. How he is going to spend his ability to work in a concrete form useful to others. And this is the problem of the organization of the labor process in any form of society. Since in order to make this expenditure he has to have means of production, from this allocation follows what means of production are to be assigned to each productive member of society.

Society needs to reproduce and develop a certain capacity to work and appropriate the environment. If we look at the process of consumption, what we have is how it is going to be assigned, not only to each *productive member* but to each member of society, what concrete use values that are the product of that social labor that it is going to consume as a means of life and reproduce its life. The problem that any human society faces when it faces each of its cycles of reproduction of its process of social metabolism is that of how the unity between the social and individual character of labor (production) and consumption is established.

So far we look at it from the point of view of the unity of the process of social metabolism. Now we need to look at it from the point of view of each individual organ of the process of social metabolism. We have said that consciousness and will is the way in which each human individual governs his action as an organ of the process of social metabolism. Consciousness, knowing oneself as an individual subject of this process of social metabolism is knowing what concrete useful form must be given to the action of the productive body of each productive individual. Unity is going to be the form that social relations take. Recognition as an organ of this process of social metabolism is the form that the conscience and will of each member of society will take.

[Question about conscious awareness] It may be that the individual says: I know that in this seed there is an embryo, that it is a living subject with such and such potentiality, and since in order to develop them it needs a certain temperature and humidity and soil structure, it plants the seed. […] And this consciousness that knows its determinations better will be freer.

[Question on consumer demand] So far we don't even know what the lawsuit is. One can look at it as the need that each individual has as a consumer of the product of social labor, or look at it in terms of something proper to the capitalist mode of production, and it has not yet appeared.

[Alejandro asks about the unity between production and consumption and the problem of seeing the two moments separately.] One needs to know unity because one needs to know concrete movement. So he cannot deny that in a movement, on one side there is something of the other, because otherwise he would be confronting that movement in an immediately abstract, not even analytical, way. For example, when we look at the labor process and I said that work is presented first and foremost as an individual activity; Immediately, in order to look at the social character of this individual's work, I had to look at a process of consumption that he does: he can work because he ate the product of the work of others, he learned to work from others, he cooperates with others... When one goes to consumption, what appears is that one consumes means of life that put one in a position to act again as a productive organ of the process of social life, to be a productive subject. And on the other hand, it consumes means of production, which are also part of the consumption process. I cannot say that consumption is simply the means of living or the other, and that they follow one another and first there is one and then the other: it contains this complexity. The problem is how the

unity between these two moments (production and consumption) is established, and this will appear through distribution.

I'm going to propose something that invades what Marx is going to develop in the fetishism of the commodity, but it's going to help us look at that. I propose that we look at the ways in which in its historical development the human race has been resolving this question until we arrive at the capitalist mode of production under what we know so far about it, which is simply the production of commodities and the condition of producers of commodities.

Since the starting point of the process of human metabolism is the process of production, because the products of labor are consumed and consequently the starting point is labor, and since each member of society consumes that which reproduces it as an organ of the process of social metabolism, in particular as a productive organ, The way in which labor is allocated, and consequently the means of production, is the way in which it is that what each member of society is going to consume as a means of production and as a means of living is assigned. Therefore, when we speak of the mode of production, we are talking about the unity of the process of social metabolism: just as production is organized, consumption is organized at the same time (not on the one hand and in different ways).

In Argentina, a proposal was very valid that the mode of production is the mode "within" each unit of production, and then the "social formation" or "social system" establishes the unity of the process of social metabolism. This type of approach goes a step further and says: there is a dominant mode of production, there are subordinate modes of production, and the social formation is the unity of these MoPs. This was reflected in the 21st century translation and in the modern English of Penguin. What in the previous translations (FCE, Justo...), was with the term: "reigns" or "reigns" the capitalist mode of production in the first sentence of *Capital*, was replaced by "in societies where the capitalist mode of production dominates". The use of *domina* at the time translation appeared was strongly associated with the presence of dominant and secondary or subordinate modes of production, and unity not as a mode of production but as the "social formation." When one has to face a concrete mode of social life, one cannot answer generically: "This is such a mode of production, this is such a mode of production." That is true when one is looking at the forms that this mode of production has in general, but not when one is looking at the concrete movement and what one has to do is look at its character. So let us look at how human beings have been developing the ways of organizing production (and consequently consumption) and, consequently, the determinations of the consciousness and will of the members of society.

If one starts with the primitive community, it is the bulk of human "history", of the development of the human being. It starts on the basis of simply animal relationships – of this highly developed animal – that gradually become relationships of personal dependence, direct personal bonds. The assignment is made on the basis that this individual is a person who is part of the community and therefore occupies a specific place in the process of social life of that community. He has the personal attributes that correspond to that community. If an individual outside the community is not recognized as a member of that community and falls

within its space, the community sees a piece of meat that is good for eating, not another human being, because he does not have the necessary personal attributes. Very roughly, it is going to be a hunter-gatherer society whose general form is: the male individual who has reached a certain age is a hunter and there is a ceremony in which he is assigned this job after he has been trained. And women at a certain age are assigned the work of collecting and transporting (because they are nomadic communities) the things of the community. And it's an assignment of what concrete useful work for the community each one is going to do, focused very immediately on the biological attributes of each of the members.

If one looks at much more complex and recent forms of these bonds of personal dependence, one will see the schematic figure of a caste or estate society. To belong to a caste is to have a certain function in the process of social metabolism. The caste of the priests organizes the process of social metabolism, the class of the peasants is in charge of the immediate execution of the work organized by the priests. As there is a mutilation of human subjectivity, in this fragmentation there are antagonistic relations within the community, and the military class coerces the peasants in particular, and since they are communities that have antagonistic relations with those around them, they fulfill the role of carrying out this part of the social labor that means breaking the heads of the members of the other communities. This assignment of social labor and of what each one is going to consume has such a personal character that the individual who is born from the biological crossing of individuals of different castes has no place in it, because if you want to assign him to one of the castes he carries with him the personal attributes that correspond to another caste. Consequently, that individual becomes an outcast, he cannot participate in the process of social production or in the general condition of social consumption (if at all minimally), he is considered an individual so impure that if he touches another he transmits the impurity of caste, he is an untouchable. This schematically. These societies had more complex forms, and remnants of these forms remain, although with a totally different character today.

If one looks at the slave mode of production, it has a multitude of forms. But in classical slavery, the assignment of the slave's labor is the power of the master (also very schematically), that of the product of the slave's labor as well, and what there is between master and slave is a bond of personal dependence, one is not the master of just anyone but of this person who is known by hair and signs.

In the feudal mode of production, social labor is assigned on the basis of bonds of personal dependence, in which the lord does not have the power to assign work directly to the serf, but he does demand from him what he has to deliver to him and organizes his work more or less. The lord does not lose the status of such even if he loses his land because it is a personal attribute, and the servant while in that society has no way of ceasing to be a serf. There is a very remarkable expression for the case of this particular society in Spanish literature and history, where the Christian lords imprisoned by the Moors were in the court of the Moorish lord waiting for the ransom to be paid. The Moorish lords who fell into the hands of the Christians had much more complicated situations. But this appears, it did not lose its attribute.

So, we have all these modes of production in which it is assigned through bonds of personal dependence what concrete useful work is going to be done by each member of society, and now we have to look at the capitalist mode of production. But first what we have is: in each of these members of the societies of [previous] modes of production, the determination that governs their consciousness and their will are the bonds of personal dependence. When we look at the capitalist mode of production, the first thing we find is that the bonds of personal dependence (family and friendship relationships) are not the general social relationship. And in addition, those direct personal ties are in the process of frankly dissolving. How, then, do we organize our process of social metabolism in our condition as individuals free from bonds of personal dependence?

We have a society of individuals who are personally mutually free. I am going to summarize it: at the moment when each cycle of the human life process is going to begin, between the individual producing organs of this society, all individuals, the only social relationship that exists is that in the person of each one there is an individual quota of the total labor power of society, And unlike all previous social forms, this quota is not assigned under a certain form, it is carried as a generic material capacity to work, to perform abstract labor, and it is a problem, a resolution that each productive individual has to make privately and independently—excluding others and governing his individual work with full control over it—what concrete useful form he is going to give it.

And now the production cycle ends and consumption has to take place, but there are no personal ties that allow one to say: since I worked for you, you have to give me the product or I have the right to receive this amount of the product of social labor because I am a member of society. So the only way to establish that unity is to establish an indirect link. Since work was done without immediate unity between production and consumption, it is not known whether the work of each was applied in a concrete socially useful way. One must prove to each other in an impersonal way that one has worked in a way that is useful to another, and that the other worked producing something that is useful to oneself. And the way to resolve this unity is this indirect link by which, if the quota of labour power in general has been allocated in a concrete way useful to another member of society, this materialization of socially necessary abstract labour is going to be represented as the capacity of the product of that labour to enter into a relation of exchange as equivalent to the same magnitude of abstract labour as the the product of another socially necessary abstract labor of the same magnitude performed under a concrete form that is recognized as this one that is here as useful to itself. What is resolved through the production of value, its representation, is this unity.

Why can't the value be represented as the quantity of labor? Because social labor is done privately and independently. In Capital, in chapter II he makes a small reference. But in the *Grundrisse* it makes a longer development and I'm going to take it. In order for value to be expressed in quantities of work, in the problem of hourly bonuses, for me to be given a bonus in exchange for my commodity, a job title that said: "This is 10 hours of work", the first thing that would have to exist is someone who says that to do this work that I did you need x hours. If someone tells

me how I have to produce, they have to give me the means of production I need to do it in those hours: I make shoes, but I don't have that machine with which they can be made in 10 hours. If someone has to tell me how I have to produce, how much, and they have to give me the machine, then it is not a society where there are no ties of direct dependence, it is a society that would be the opposite of the capitalist mode of production. It is to pretend that in the capitalist mode of production, this private labor is immediately social labor; and it cannot be, it has to be recognized as socially useful work after it has been carried out. And the only way in which it can be recognized is when it enters into an exchange relation with another commodity that is a general equivalent, money.

So the reason why when social labor is done privately and independently, its materialization in the product is represented as the value of the product, is that this is the way in which free individuals devoid of bonds of personal dependence with the full mastery of their individual labor (the condition for that is private ownership over one's own means of production) is the way in which we organize our process of social metabolism. We lack any personal bond, our social relation has the form of an indirect bond objectified in the commodity, and therefore has the form of a thing which has the attribute of relating socially to me who am a free individual.

What about the consciousness and will of a free, commodity-producing individual? Before the production of commodities there are no free individuals, there is no capacity to think of oneself as a human being. Where does equality appear as a naturalized image of the human being? In society where the social relationship is established through a change of equivalents. The absence of all human equality (no two individuals are equal) takes the form of the absolute natural condition of human beings as equals. When we talk about commodity producers, we are talking about ourselves, our social relationship and our subjectivity (consciousness and will). We are going to go to the capitalist mode of production; We did not have to go back in history to discover what our consciousness is, it is enough for us to look at ourselves as free individuals and ask ourselves: how do we establish the unity of our process of social metabolism if we do not have bonds of personal dependence? Through the production of commodities.

[II]

[...] What was the importance of the question that abstract labor is a *material* expenditure of the human body? The problem is to assign this material capacity to work in general under the different concrete useful forms. So, we are not talking about an abstraction with respect to what is at stake in the representation of that materiality of abstract labor as a social attribute of commodities. The problem is that when one is always looking at all the determinations of value, what one is looking at is how the material question of assigning that total labor power of society to the different concrete material forms in which it is going to be applied is resolved. [...] That which was produced with one of the quotas of the labor power

of society in general, and that the private form that was given to the expenditure of that labor power is socially useless (it is not a use value for any other member of that society), what is going to be shown is that in that a posteriori unity, that part has been a waste of society's labor power, and it does not count from the point of view of the closure of the development of the process of social metabolism. But since the work is done privately and independently, that waste falls on the individuals who did it [...].

[Question about the a priori and a posteriori units of production and consumption] In a mode of production governed by bonds of personal dependence, production is set in motion with the immediate aim of producing certain use-values necessary for the process of reproduction of social life. Since when work is set in motion it is a power to be realized, it may happen that production is in excess or in excess of what that society needs to reproduce itself. But what governs the action of each individual productive organ is the production of social use-values which are known to be social, and what is produced will enter into social consumption. There is an immediate unity a priori: it is a question of producing such and such use-values that will satisfy this process of social metabolism. That production may not be able to be satisfied. When this happens acutely in a mode of production of this type, what comes is a famine.

In the capitalist mode of production there is no such immediate unity but each individual decides privately and independently how to govern his production and therefore there is the possibility that he will make mistakes and produce things that are not social use values, which are socially useless. It is a unit that can only be established *after* production has been done, a posteriori. Then we will look at the problem of the quantities produced of each type of commodity. As we advance, the different aspects by which the establishment of the a posteriori unity of production will have implications for the reproduction of social life will become apparent.

So far what we have is: society had a labor force in general, let's suppose that out of 100 (a quantification that is not valid, but it serves us), that amount is put into action, it is spent, and at the end of production it becomes evident that, let's suppose, 10 units of that labor power were destined to do socially useless things, that is, that now it has 90 percent of materialization of that labor force to consume only because of the way in which the work is organized, not because of a problem of bad natural conditions or because the production objectives were not achieved, it is because that part was spent uselessly. The result of producing 10 that are useless has concrete repercussions is that those who spent those 10 were left without social relations, they do not have the capacity to be assigned product for their consumption. Since work is carried out privately and independently, consumption is also governed (not exactly) as being private and independent.

If a member of the primitive community failed in his action as the productive organ of that society (he went out hunting and did not take anything) he is assigned a part of the product of social labor. It is not that he spent 10 uselessly materialized in something useless, but that he could not materialize it in a product. That individual does not lose his titles as an individual organ within social consumption, the community assigns him a part anyway so that he reproduces himself because he is immediately recognized as an individual organ of that

community. The consumption of each one is guaranteed at least as a member of society: if half manage to hunt and the other half did not, everyone will be assigned a share of what was hunted [if no one hunted, everyone starves]. When this society goes out to produce, it knows what a use value is.

In the capitalist mode of production there is an indirect recognition. The one who did not achieve such recognition through having produced an object carrying value does not have the right to participate in social consumption, since he has no relationship with others, he does not have such participation. In this society no one knows with certainty, a priori, what a use value is or is not, because for that it would require a social agreement around what must be produced and the amount of work that is going to be dedicated to each type of use value, you have to allocate the means of production that you need to produce and the means of life that you need to produce again. And that is what does not exist in the capitalist mode of production. No one can claim that what he produced is socially useful: it depends on others, who express themselves not through a personal bond but through the value of commodities.

[Question about the "pariahs"] It is not simply that society decides it, it is the form that the social relationship has in that society with bonds of personal dependence, which means: I look at that individual and I know who he is. When you have bonds of personal dependence, you look at your family members and know who they are, you can tell who is a member or not, and the same with friends. When one has bonds of personal dependence, it makes the person of the individual "with hair and signs." In caste society, as it is an attribute of the person, it makes his biological condition. There are people who belong to a caste, and that attribute is transmitted because father and mother are of the same caste. And the problem is when an individual is the product of the biological crossing of individuals from two different castes, cannot fit into either of the castes and becomes an outcast. Since one does not have the attribute, one has no way of being assigned one or another job and the consumption that corresponds to that work. This is what personal bonds imply: attributes that are in the person of each individual and are inseparable from that person while he or she is within that society.

[Javiera mentions the five-year plan]

I make this clarification. Later we will look at the USSR, but it was enough to look at the reports of the five-year plan to see manifestations of whether or not there is a direct unity between production and social consumption: the five-year plan is a proposal for the allocation of the labor force that then has to be seen if it is socially useful or useless, whether it is Peronist, from the Soviet Union... And in the USSR there was the "clear" proposal (within the USSR it was not so clear) that it was necessary to recognize whether what had been produced was socially useful through (I am going to put it simply in these terms) a commercial relationship. Five-year plans in the capitalist mode of production do not guarantee unity, they do not presuppose a direct allocation of social labour.

Only if it is to answer us about our subjectivity, then we will make the comparison with other forms of social relations. If not, first: one is violating the

proper development of dialectical knowledge (in Marx the comparison does not appear until he has finished deploying the determination). One can simply make the comparison to look at it further, but strictly the development is made on the basis of this object which one has in front of one, which is the commodity in the capitalist mode of production as it presents itself in its simplest form. Development is going to lead us to look at this movement in a very general way because it is to answer something that the commodity in its present cannot answer, it is going to confront us with a contradiction, that when we want to unfold it we are going to say: it has no way of being deployed in what we have, so let's see if in the process of historical development we find the answer to this that has no "resolution" (it is not correct the term but...) in the present of the capitalist mode of production. And there we will go on this question.

We answer what the deployment of the commodity itself puts in front of us. And so far it has not put us in front of that problem, we have not explained anything through the comparison between commercial and personal ties, no explanation of the determinations of value that has had to appeal to that comparison. When I was using that comparison it was because it is the example of contrast, it is not the *cause* of what one is looking at. What one does with that is to say: what is here has a different form from what is here. But those pre-capitalist societies do not matter to me for what I am looking at, I can do the development up to this point without stopping at all in the bonds of personal dependence. I did not say that my problem was to answer myself about the historical development of the capitalist mode of production, but about this commodity. If in the development of this we have the need to look at something that is not proper to the capitalist mode of production, we are going to look at it as the axis of development. The other observations are to highlight the contrast, and now Marx in the section on fetishism is going to make the contrast, just after having exposed *within* the production of commodities in the simplicity of their purity, other ways of organizing social life will appear where precisely the difference they have is that they are based on bonds of personal dependence, except for one that is later left undefined.

[Question about the fact that before the commodity there are no free individuals] When one looks at commodity production, social labor done privately and independently, one sees that there are no bonds of personal dependence. The members of this society are individuals free from personal dependence on each other in our general social relationship. When one looks at other MoPs, there are no individuals free from bonds of personal dependence. An example, although premature, that expresses this: the condition of the free individual is so established with respect to the personal, that it is an inalienable attribute from the point of view of the general recognition of society. This means: if I make a contract with another individual saying that I freely and voluntarily become his slave, it is said that it is as if it were not written, it does not exist. In Argentina there are only two possibilities to renounce this condition and have it socially recognized:

1) Legal marriage, as a situation in which two reciprocally free individuals come to renounce their reciprocal freedom and establish a bond of direct personal dependence, which implies that one cannot behave as a free individual in that relationship. One of the expressions of this is that a free

individual, in the face of a crime (it is abstractly put that way), has the obligation to tell the truth. When there is a bond of personal dependence, he has lost that condition of free individual and cannot be forced in judicial terms to testify against the person with whom he has that personal bond.

2) Adoption. There is a free individual who comes to renounce his condition with respect to another individual who is not free, who is under the personal power of something or someone.

In the case of Argentina, this has a manifestation that directly affects political relations. A "Due Obedience" law was drafted that excused subordinates of the armed forces for having tortured, murdered, disappeared people because they obeyed orders given to them by superior individuals. That law is invalidated at a certain point because the proposal is that no one can renounce his condition as a free individual, and if he killed another because a second ordered him to, he is responsible for what he did, and the one who ordered it to do also because he acted as a free individual is not supposed to act.

This is the expression of that conception of freedom as a natural attribute of the human being, a condition that only arises when one produces commodities. Because one cannot live without social ties: either he has personal ties, or this indirect link through commodities. The second aspect of this is equality, which I also mentioned. Twins are not the same, and yet, and Marx is going to put it in terms of "popular prejudice", there is the image of natural equality, which appears because when we relate socially we do so through the exchange of equivalents, which makes us see ourselves as lacking personal attributes that differentiate us in that relationship and that we simply exchange equivalents because we do not have personal attributes that differentiate us. These are forms of consciousness that correspond to what follows.

[He again explains the difference with the modes of production where the general social relationship is based on bonds of personal dependence, he mentions red and blue blood in feudalism.]

When the bonds of personal dependence disappear, it is indifferent who the other is as a person: what matters is what commodity he produced, whether or not it is a value, and consequently one can look at others and can see oneself with a universal qualitative attribute (we are all equal human beings). Aristotle could not see labor as the source of changeability. He realizes that for two qualitatively different things to be put in a relationship of equality they have to have an attribute in common, but his answer is: they do not have any attribute in common, it has to be conventional. According to Marx, he cannot see it because he lives in a society in which there are masters and slaves, he cannot see a generic human condition, he cannot conceive of human labor in general, but on the one hand the work of masters and on the other the labor of slaves.

[On the appeal to insanity in a trial]

This appeal is to renounce the condition of a free individual, but I cannot do that myself, to say "I am insane". All of this has to do with concrete forms. Let's look at natural freedom and then we will see about the concrete legal forms where this social relationship is clearly reflected, and what happens when one does something that is not proper to the condition of a free individual.

4. The fetishistic nature of the commodity and its secrecy.

We move on to the section on commodity fetishism. We know these determinations about the expression of value, but we are looking at the commodity again from its external relation. Marx states that commodities are trivial objects, because at first glance they were use values, but that immediately... He takes the figure that the Chinese tables and chairs began to dance to encourage the others, an expression that Ryazanov explains[37], where he quotes a letter from Marx in which he uses this figure earlier: at the time of this, spiritualism had spread in Europe, that of tables that move by themselves, and in China there had been the coolie revolution[38], the resolution of which is the spread of popular opium consumption, which tames them.

Commodities have this mysterious, metaphysical aspect, religious remnants because they are material things that nevertheless have the capacity to socially bind individuals. The question then is where this capacity comes from. And an analysis begins that takes the form of a discarding of attributes: it cannot come from use-value because this is common to all the products of social labor. Nor can they come from the concrete form of work, because that is also done in every form of society. Nor can it come from the abstract character of labor, from the substance of value, because abstract labor exists in any society, it is a physiological expenditure of labor power. The difference is that in some societies, in the organization of work, they take more manifest account of this determination of work in general and in others less so.

One can see in the primitive community that the management of social labor always keeps in mind that this society has a mass of labor force in general and a need for the reproduction of human bodies in general, but it is clear that the assignment is going to be governed very directly by the concrete forms of work. But if one looks at the mode of production of the ancient empires, where enormous masses of labor power are put into operation all together, it is clear that the management of the total capacity to perform concrete labor that society has must have functioned very strongly there. Here the assignment and organization of that labor must necessarily have passed through the assignment of masses of abstract labor (the material capacity of society to work) to different concrete forms, and then a more immediate assignment of which singular individuals were going to do each concrete labor. This assignment then occurs in every form of society.

[37] Founder of the Marx-Engels Institute and editor of his complete works. Victim of the purges of the late 1930s.

[38] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cul%C3%AD

So Marx goes on to say: from none of these determinations can emerge this "metaphysical" attribute of the commodity that presents itself as having a capacity to socially relate the producers. The only place from which it can spring is from the specific form of the organization of social labour in the capitalist mode of production, from the commodity-form itself, which is the product of social labour carried out privately and independently, which implies that there seems to be no *a priori* unity between production and consumption. no social relationship between individual organs. The link appears in the change process. Then it appears as if that object that is changed has the attribute of socially linking its producers. It is the product of the conscious action of the producers, and it confronts those producers as if it had the power to define what is socially useful/useless, which the producers cannot define on their own. It then appears as a materialized existence that springs from the conscious action of the producers but confronts the producers having the attribute of organizing, of dominating the organization of their process of production and social consumption. The figure of the fetish is strictly this: it is the product of a human action that confronts its producer as having a power over him, which dominates him.

If someone makes a little doll of my person and sticks pins in it and I look at the little doll I say: that's not my person, poor little doll because they're ruining it, but it's not going to hurt me. Now, I look at that little doll and I say that it is my person objectified outside of my person and has the power to represent me and dominate me, when they stick pins in it it hurts me. That is the most vulgar figure of the fetish. And the term "commodity fetishism" is reflecting this, that it acts as a fetish, it determines whether what I did is socially useful or useless, and if it tells me that it is useless, of course it hurts me, because I can't participate in social consumption, and then I can't reproduce my individual process of metabolism. And I died.

Marx goes on to sum this up by saying: to the consciousness of commodity producers, the social relations they have with each other are presented for what they are: they are not relations between people, but relations between things that indirectly allow people to relate to each other. But they are not abstract relations between things: the content of this concrete form is that they are relations between persons, but they are not direct personal relations. It is not that the owners of commodities are "deceived" when they look at this fantastic attribute of their commodity: they see the form of their relationship because that is the way in which they are related, the problem is what their content is.

[Answering a question about whether being dominated by that object, we are "insane"]: In what follows we will see that no, you cannot appeal to dementia simply like that.

[Gabriel asks what the *realization* of the commodity implies]. Value is produced in production, where abstract labor is materialized in its product at the end of production. Abstract labor is socially necessary/unnecessary at the time it is being performed. Once it's already materialized in your product, there's no going back. What is going to happen with that value is that it is going to be recognized as such only in the process of change. Then the term "*realization*" of commodities, of value,

will appear, which implies the transformation of the commodity into money. But what we cannot say is that at that moment is when it is born, it has reality, value. We saw that exchange is a relationship of quantitative equality that in order to be established there must be the same quality at the two poles of the relationship, which is value. Marx says that the relationship never *puts* the quality, but rather shows that the quality exists in these related existences, contrary to the image that some proposals have.

Javiera: Where does the question about the mysterious character come from? Because it seems that it was answered when we saw that it was a product of the SNALdPaI.

JIC: One can look at it as a form of exposition that Marx is going to unfold very markedly in Volume 1, which lays down the block of exposition, the unity of the form that dialectical knowledge has. Dialectical reproduction begins with an immediate observation (representation can expose from any starting point) that wealth appears in this way, and then what follows is an analysis of the necessity of what is manifested. When he finds the specific need for it, he displays that determination. Inside that chapter appears half that structure. All development is over: immediate observation, analysis, and deployment. But he starts again with an immediate observation, which is what a commodity owner would make again: this thing nevertheless has these fantastic powers. Then comes an analysis that takes place as a discarding of things that are not, because he has already deployed them before. He is summarizing, if you will, the analysis he made before until he arrives at the fact that it is private and independent work. So we go back to the observation and ask: why is it that it appears as a fantastic thing? What is unfolding then is the consciousness of the commodity producer.

The exposition could also have been: "Now let's look at what happens to the consciousness of the commodity producer," and have started directly. And he will say: when he looks at this, as it relates through things, it will seem to him that things have this property. But the only thing that matters to him is what they are going to give him in return, he does not ask himself why this changeable attribute. And then there is the need for an objective consciousness to answer why value as work cannot be expressed in quantities of work. But this objective consciousness stops at looking at the substance, but it cannot explain the form because when it looks at the product of its labor it believes that by nature it has by nature the attribute of being a changeable object. In the end, there is again what appeared as an external observation from the outset (that is, an object with fantastic properties, something that consciousness alienated thinks in commodities), and the question of why consciousness has alienated consciousness in commodities, and then comes the unfolding of that consciousness.

There is a time when the whole question of the form of value is like an appendix, like a clarification of things that have been clarified before. And if one looks from the drafts where the form of consciousness appears in different editions, there is at first a reference to fetishism, and then it incorporates more and more development. Only Marx knows why he structured it in this way, but if I look at it, this way of expounding refers me to the unity of dialectical knowledge. And chapter II starts

exactly the same, with something immediately evident and that is the opposite of the content it has, and the unfolding as far as it can to reach the concrete form comes.

[Xatan's question on the materiality of value] The commodity is the bearer of the social relation, its form, because it has value. Value exists only materialized in the commodity, there are no commodities that are not materialization of SNALdPaI. How do I relate socially? Through the exchange of commodities.

Xatan: What I was asking is whether the value "in itself" would be the social relationship itself between concrete subjects.

JIC: I would have to repeat the same thing to you. One relates through the value of commodities, the substance of the social relation, its form is commodities. Value without a commodity body does not exist, and neither does a commodity without value content. Depending on what reference one is going to make to the social relationship, one can name it by the content or only by the form, depending on the moment. I produce the social relation when I produce value, but in order to produce value I must have produced a commodity.

Xatan: So how would you define what value is after all this development?

JIC: Value is the socially necessary abstract labor materialized privately and independently in its product, which is socially represented as the social attribute of that product that is a commodity to be exchanged for another. I add: this is a mode of production in which material production is at the same time the production of the general social relation, one does not simply produce use-values, but at the same time one's social relation is inseparable. In other modes of production it does not produce its social relation. All this is going to have its manifestations in the consciousness of the commodity producer, because if I govern my production with a consciousness that is the bearer of a social relation that precedes the process of my material production, I am going to see my material product in a certain way, I am going to see a use value. When I simultaneously produce a social relation, I don't see simply a use value, but something that has the ability to say whether I worked in a socially useful way or not.

At a certain point I asked: what is consciousness? The capacity with which each member of society governs its action, recognizing itself as an individual organ of the process of social life. What is a producer's conscience? How do I organize my work to produce social use values? When I look at what tells me whether my work was socially useful or not, it is an attribute that is not in my person but in my commodity. Sometimes one says that if it has no value it is not a commodity, it is the product of socially useless work. The way to recognize myself as an individual organ of social metabolism is by looking at my commodity, which is the capacity to govern my action as an organ of such a process.

We will advance in the deployment that Marx is going to make on the consciousness of the commodity producer. The first step is to say: if we look at it in immediate manifestation as something fantastic, it appears to them as they are.

They are material relations between people, because what matters between people is the use value, and social relations between things because commodities are capable of entering into this relationship. The recognition that exists in the relationship between things is that these private jobs are going to be recognized in this double condition of socially useful labor because of the concrete form that will have yielded a use value that satisfies a given social need within the unity of the process of social metabolism, and at the same time it will show that the productive expenditure of the body in general, having been carried out privately, it has the character of useful social labor in so far as it can be equated with an equivalent. The form in this mode of production of the recognition of labor as socially useful is not simply through the concrete form but indirectly through the abstract character of labor.

Commodity producers do not see that they are changing the products of their labor because they are materializations of abstract labor of equal quantity. It is in the fact of changing that the value of commodities will be revealed, they will face value at the moment they change, after having changed. That is what makes commodities appear as hieroglyphs and they begin to wonder why these products have the attribute of being exchangeable objects. Only then do they ask themselves what common attribute it can have and it appears to them that it has to be the result of an action they perform. And after facing it in this way, the possibility of scientific knowledge will appear (Marx: it is a late scientific discovery that commodities contain human labor: this is the attribute). But at the same time that they look at human labor, it still seems to them (if their consciousness does not transcend the form of their social relation) that this is a general attribute of human labor by nature, the production of changeable objects. It remains a prisoner of the very determinations of commodity production, its historical character is not seen. Marx is going to look at what happens to the individuals who are imprisoned within the movement of commodity exchange, how value is presented to them, the immediate manifestation that there is an autonomous and internal "invisible" regulation, and there he is going to unfold the fullness of the consciousness of the producers of commodities and he is going to make the external comparison with other ways of organizing the life of society.

[II]

[Answering the question of equivalential form, he ends by speaking of abstract labour] There are three characteristics in which what the commodity is expressing at the pole of equivalent is inverted: use-value expresses value, concrete labour expresses abstract labour... and Jesús Rojo pointed out to me the other time we spoke that in the original German there is a different word for the case of social labor (in some translations it is for the 3 "expresses" and for others "is the form"); according to Jesus, in the original, use-value "*expresses* value," concrete labor "*represents* abstract labor," and private labor "*is the form* of social labor."

The fullest form of commodity fetishism is money fetishism. Because it will appear that by nature it has the attribute of expressing the value of others, because it does not immediately manifest any attribute of those things that it is going to

express. It is the product of private labor. The private labor that gold makes—in this case—has no condition of its own that allows us to suppose that it gives it the property of representing human labor in general, it is a concrete labor like any other, it is a useful object like any other. And yet it has this social attribute of representing value, which is manifested in the fact that it is immediately exchangeable for any other commodity, a power that no other commodity has. So, it seems more like a natural attribute of money, the power to be the bearer of the social relationship of its producers. The one that is at the pole of the equivalent, which has the attribute, because of its materiality as the product of concrete labor, etc., of representing the value of the other, it would seem that the commodity that is in the equivalent is the one that has by itself that social power fully expressed. But in reality the only thing it does is to reflect that in the social relationship between the producers of commodities; that which is at the relative pole is expressing that it is the way in which its possessor relates socially as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism, and yet, since everything is inverted, it seemed that this is an attribute that the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent gives it.

Commodity producers do not see the content of what they are doing, only the form. Then there is the belated question about what is being done, what is enclosed in this relationship, etc. [...] Fetishistic consciousness is not a consequence of an abstract "human ignorance": it is the form that the consciousness of commodity producers has, not that they might not do it, but they do: there is a necessity for them to look at themselves in this way by entering into this indirect social relation without ties of personal dependence, It is not something imposed. The owner of commodities does not ask why the commodity is an exchangeable object, what he asks is how much they are going to give him in exchange for his commodity. And this appears to acquire, through the movement of commodities themselves, a more or less "stable" expression.

So, it seems that by nature a certain amount of commodities is exchanged for a certain amount of money. So, what appears is that these quantities of a commodity and money have the natural attribute of being equated. It appears to the producers of commodities that they are subject to the capacity of their commodities to be exchanged in a certain proportion for others, or in the concrete form, for money. It will then appear that there is a natural law that regulates exchange relations and that it will be imposed beyond the will of individuals. And that these exchange proportions have to do with the amount of labor that is expended in producing the different commodities and that will appear in the exchange.

This is where the practical consciousness of the producers of commodities appears, the vulgar knowledge, but a scientific consciousness that begins to ask itself about the determinations of this normality that was imposed and that when it begins to ask itself about this, what it is going to face is above all with that movement already unfolded. with practical consciousness already developed, the proportions of exchange between different commodities deployed... And instead of making it clear that it is an expression of a historical way of organizing the life of society, what is going to appear is that this has the character of a natural determination. So instead of making it clear that what is at stake is the private

organization of social labor, what is going to appear is that this has nothing to do with the private character of work, but that it springs from the nature of things and work. That is where Marx is going to look at the historical character of commodity production by comparing it with previous modes of production.

Since in none of them is labor carried out privately, taken in its purity, what appears are direct personal dependency bonds, the exchange relations mediated by commodities do not appear in these bonds, and the fetishistic consciousness of commodity producers does not appear. When he takes Robinson's example, he is showing a social organ, a living subject whose organicity is carried out in the different concrete forms of activity that Robinson has to do. So how does Robinson organize those things? Since it constitutes an immediate unit in his person, if one looks at the possibilities of his different activities, he assigns what time he is going to dedicate to each of those activities directly, and then he is going to put it into the society in which he is no longer an individual who is abstractly represented as if he had a social character in himself. but directly social labor organizations based on bonds of personal dependence. Marx will not find the value of commodities by comparing them with previous modes of production, he will not discover why it is expressed as exchange value... What he is going to show using this comparison is: there is a historical form of consciousness that is based on the fact that relations between people have the form of relations between things (in contrast to the form of relations between people in previous modes of production).

Marx is going to refer to a society where what exists is an association of free individuals who work with collective means of production, and that each of them knows that they are the individual organ of the unity of this process of social life. They then put their individual jobs to work as if they were a single social labor force. What he is going to propose is: this way of organizing the process of social life is not what exists: on the contrary, what exists is the fetishism of the commodity as a form of relation. The capitalist mode of production is of individuals free *of personal dependence*, who relate indirectly to each other through exchange and therefore their consciousness is subject to the fetishism of the commodity, subjected to a social power alien to individuals and objectified in their commodities. Marx will contrast it with a society of free individuals who, far from having a fetishistic consciousness, have an objective consciousness and recognize themselves as individual organs of the process of social life in a rational way. But the possibility of the existence of this form of society is the development of a material base, of material conditions of existence, which are the result of "a long and painful evolution," and are not present in the immediacy of what we are looking at.

[Javiera asks about the relationship between fetishism and alienation in the *Manuscripts* of 1844, where religious forms also appear].

This is where alienation appears, which is based on the fact that the product of labor is alien because it belongs to the non-worker. But here in what we are looking at, a "non-worker" never appeared. It appears that there are private means of production but private property is not set as the condition of production: on the contrary, it springs from private labor. I would try to take it up again by looking at

this very thing, but once the way in which Marx expounds it has been completed. To look again at what a free individual and his consciousness are, if there are before the commodity, and what form the consciousness of the producers of commodities takes, how they recognize themselves as organs of the process of social life.

As for religious forms... In every religious conception, from the most primitive form, we are looking at powers, productive forces that are proper to human subjects as if they were placed in them by a power external to their person, and at the same time we are seeing a series of natural conditions that cannot be controlled but that it is clear that they play a role in the exercise of social production. as if they had the power to act as subjects who impose themselves on the limited powers of personal subjectivity; because they are always ways of organizing the process of social life where the productive forces are absolutely limited and very strongly subordinated to natural conditionings that there is no way to control. Then the subjectivation of many of these natural processes appears and at a certain point the identification with those subjectivations and the powers themselves appears as if springing from that subjectivation.

So, it is clear that religious forms are looking at one's own powers as if they were foreign powers. In all of them there is a recognition of the generic human being, by which one recognizes oneself as the bearer of powers given to him by his ancestors [from generation to generation]. What appears later are forms of religious consciousness where the condition of being generic is alienated from individual life; they only see their condition as mortal individuals, and the generic life that transcends them as individuals will only occur after they die. They are forms of consciousness alienated insofar as one can say: I am not fully recognizing myself in the determination of my subjectivity as an individual of the human race, but I am dwelling on appearances. It seems to me that this generic condition is after my individual life.

The term *alienation* is in all forms of religious consciousness. Fetishism has a peculiar condition. It is not simply a mental product, but a material one of human action, which confronts the subject as if it had supernatural powers. The fetish in classical terms is a product of human action that is objectified in this thing, and the thing is the one that has the power. In religious alienations there are forms of fetishism, fetishistic images, but there are other religions that have even the possibility of naming their god proscribed, and there it is more complicated to say that there is a fetishism, because the god does not appear springing from human action, he has no figure, he cannot be represented because he transcends any immediate form of materiality. On the other hand, in fetishism, power is attributed to the product. I stopped discussing religion about 60 years ago, so I can't be so rigorous. But it seems to me that if one wanted to delve deeper into religions, I have no doubt that they are forms of alienated consciousness, but I would not dare to say whether they are all fetishistic or not, one would have to look at the concrete development.

The thing that "the fetish is in everything" that Ignacio says, one has to see if it is so immediately like that or if, because we live in a society where the social

relationship has the form of a fetish, it was not done the other way around and the meaning of the term fetish was extended to everything. Otherwise, this process of inversion of what is proper to a materialized social relationship appears as if it were inherent in any form of social relationship. Alienation in the commodity is the simplest determination of the consciousness of the commodity producers, and we shall find it in every existence of their consciousness. One may have faced the fetishistic character but is still alienated in the commodity, one's social bond is still alienated in the commodity. One can say, "I know that what I am doing is producing my social bond, and my social bond says what I have to do," and I do not have a fetishistic consciousness, but it is still alienated in the commodity. One thing is an alienated consciousness that is fetishistic, and another is an alienated consciousness that knows itself to be alienated and therefore does not believe that the commodity has by nature the supernatural power to subdue you. He knows that he cannot stop producing commodities because he has no other social relation, and that what he is going to say whether it is socially useful or useless labor is the commodity.

Marx will highlight the limitations of scientific consciousness in discovering what is at stake in the production of commodities as a specific historical form of organization of the process of social metabolism and he will take as an example the case of David Ricardo who makes this grotesque figure of fishermen and primitive hunters exchanging their commodities considering the interest rates that existed in the London market in his time. Why do you take Ricardo as the fullness of this and not Adam Smith? For Smith says: in the rude and primitive state of society, which precedes the accumulation of capital (Marx is going to mock the term "stock"), if hunting a beaver takes twice as long as hunting a deer, it is natural that one beaver should be exchanged for two serfs. But Ricardo adds: yes, it is natural that the products of labor should be exchangeable objects; but looking at what happens to the concrete determinations of prices in the capitalist mode of production, he will see that commodities are not exchanged simply in proportion to the quantities of labour they contain, and that the proportions between the different capitals that produced the commodities and the profit that the capitalists have come into play. that he is going to measure it by the interest rate. Then there is not only the question of naturalization, but even more grotesque: every product of labor is interchangeable in proportion to the quantities of labor it contains, but also in proportion the rates of interest mediate. This is the absolute naturalization of concrete forms of the capitalist mode of production. Then Marx has this irony about the building of ideal harmonious societies. Owen was one of the theorists who put it into practice, where the work within it had the character of a directly social labor without all these discussions, with moral foundations and so on.

When he looks at this about Ricardo, he says: what does political economy do as a science? Even if they do so without going to the full depth of analysis, they discover the substance of value—labor—they discover the magnitude of value—quantity of labor—but what they can never explain is why value is never expressed in quantities of labor, only as exchange value. When one asks about exchange-value one discovers the historical character of the commodity, and since political economy is the science of the bourgeoisie, one can never look at one's own way of

organizing itself in the present as if it were something historical and therefore perishable, one has to look at it as if it were natural.

One of the expressions in classical political economy is that when Smith is confronted with money, and on the point that value is not expressed in quantities of labor, Smith says: one is accustomed to exchange one thing for another. Not even that, really: he's used to trading one thing for money. And then it seems simpler and more natural to him to express value in money. And that is all the explanation that Adam Smith can give, because we would have to answer that it happens because it is a product of SNALdPaI, and the private organization of work is a historical and not a natural form. And Smith and Ricardo are the best representatives of classical political economy. Then he goes on to make the famous clarification regarding the difference between classical political economy and vulgar economics.

He goes on to name William Petty as the father of political economy before Smith, and he says: they are asking themselves why it is these relations through which it appears to constitute the unity of the process of social metabolism, what for them is natural is the capitalist mode of production, and when one looks at this period of development of political economy what appears is that there is a need to discover what This is what is at stake in order to operate on the indirect unity that is produced through the exchange of commodities, with the limitation that at the same time it must be regarded as if it were eternal.

On the other hand, vulgar economics fulfills a purely ideological role, there is no scientific content. In another text he is going to refer to a "cameralist science" of which he makes some comments that are similar to those he makes about vulgar economics but that at the same time is the condition for being able to work in public management. In vulgar economics the bourgeois mode of production is set up as the best of all possible worlds. I, having had to undergo training through different forms of vulgar economics, among other things neoclassical economics, come to the conclusion that it is not that it is the best, but that it is the only possible world because it is natural. Nature can be attacked, but this is what exists. Then he makes some observations about [something] that became the axis of neoclassical economics: that the material form that social relations have in the capitalist mode of production serves as the basis for the construction of political economy. Marx speaks of some vulgar economists, "not a few". But today it is the universe of economists, where the determination of value is given by utility (use value) and scarcity, which are natural conditions.

With that, in principle, we have Marx's deployment in this chapter. I go back to one of those things that Marx looks at by comparing the capitalist mode of production with other forms of society where commodities also appear. It is not the purity of the organization of the entire process of social metabolism through the exchange of commodities, but the existence of bonds of personal dependence that are key to the general organization of the process of social production, when what is going to appear is how the very possibility of discovering the condition of alienation, The particular expression of this alienation in a fetishistic consciousness can only be the product of the full development of this objectified

social relation, of the alienation of consciousness in the commodity. And the place where he is going to pose it – and I am going to open up the question of whether free individuals existed before the capitalist mode of production – Marx is going to put it precisely when he looks at the situation that Aristotle faces. [...] He cannot realize that what is common between two commodities is the materialization of abstract labor (they were so even in his time, or incipiently in development). But that presupposes that one can look at the human being as a universal subject [he repeats what he did in the previous session on the work of the master and the slave].

Fetishism cannot spring from the substance of value as abstract labour, for abstract labour is common to every form of society. What is historically specific about it is that this abstract labor is carried out privately and independently. In order to be able to look at human work as a condition proper to human beings and not to *certain* human beings, the first condition is that the consciousness of individuals looks at itself and sees that they are equal human beings. Only in a society [such as ours] can one think about the general human character of work. Aristotle has the merit of having discovered the relation of equality in a place where he could not see the substance of that equality; [Marx] is going to give Aristotle many credits, but if a "giant of thought" stumbled upon this particular form, how could others like Bastiat, a "dwarf of economics," not stumble?

Neoclassical economics, vulgar to the core, has a "moment" of objective knowledge, which stops at the most immediate appearances, at the most immediate relations of measurement. That it has no explanation as to why things happen, explanations are part of the ideological essence but they kick the ideological pseudo-foundations it has. In any case, it is not simply a pure ideological construction. It has this thing of objective knowledge that is absolutely external, but which has an objective character. The fundamentals of neoclassical economics are kicked in, but they develop as part of it. The central banks of the world are managed by neoclassical economists, so *some* operating capacity has to be given by this supposed process of production of consciousness. It is very similar to this "cameralist sciences" (I could never find the phrase again).

I make a clarification: in *Capital* there is no reference to the "free individual", but to the worker who carries out his work privately and independently. The first way in which a commodity producer sees himself is an individual who lacks a direct social relationship, absolutely independent and has to act as such in order to organize his social labor privately and independently. [Repeats what happens to him if he doesn't produce something useful, etc.]

[...] We have to differentiate in the capitalist mode of production what is a simple human need for use values, from what is a human need capable of representing itself through value. One can summarize it like this: hunger is hunger, but from the point of view of commodity production, of how social labor is assigned privately and independently, the only hunger that counts, that exists, is the one that is capable of being represented through money, "solvent hunger." We have to differentiate then between what is a human need to reproduce the process of human life, and what is a solvent human need.

If we look again at this commodity producer (whom for simplicity's sake I will call "Mr. Gnocchi"), he was quite out of place with respect to his social relation if he believed that he had to produce simple use-values. Because the first thing that every future commodity producer learns in order to be able to act as such is something else that Marx also makes a reference to, if I remember correctly, in the *Grundrisse*, where he says: here the social relationship is carried by each one in his pocket. If it does, it can satisfy its needs for use values; if not, no. I use this [shows a banknote] as the expression of: this is my general social bond, if I have it in my pocket, then I count from the point of view of social consumption. This is the first determination of the consciousness of the commodity producer: he knows that what he has to produce is value, it is the immediate goal with which he sets in motion private and independent social labor, it is not simply the production of use-values for others.

This commodity producer has the consciousness and will of a free individual. In analyzing commodities we found that the commodity producer has full control of his individual labor process, free from any possibility of control that can be imposed on him by another individual. Thus, the commodity producer is first of all the bearer of productive powers of his labor that transcend that of any other use-value that is subject to bonds of personal dependence. The freer this individual is, the more he is the bearer of the fullness of the human generic condition with respect to his individual work. He works for others and has no control over the social character of his work, over his condition as an individual organ within the process of social metabolism, he has to produce use values but he has no way of cooperating with others, if one were to work with others he has to combine with them how he is going to use the means of production. And here we have the full condition of social labor carried out privately and independently. The commodity producer will find that what is the bearer of his capacity to recognize himself as an organ of the process of social metabolism (something socially useful has been produced and therefore he will be able to dispose of the product of the labor of others) is presented to him as an attribute that is not of his person but of his commodity. an object that is the product of his work but alien to his person and that has the social attribute of linking him with others.

How, then, is the free consciousness and will of the commodity producer determined? First I have to make a clarification: what I propose about freedom is at my own risk, I am not going to say that Marx says it. [...] When does it appear in the development of human history to recognize oneself as *a free individual* and to put the term as it is? It appears with commodity production. Outside of it, even when it develops before the capitalist mode of production, all the proposals about human freedom are typical of societies where commodities are produced because there are no longer any more ties of personal dependence. When one looks at national constitutions, the word "freedom" appears everywhere, and I can take it with reference to concrete forms: it is an inalienable condition. It is a term closely linked to commodity production.

In the case of minors, they are under the guardianship of a "parent, guardian or guardian". An exchange of commodities made with a minor, who is not a free

individual, is not written, a minor cannot contract. When those who have authority over the minor authorize him to buy and sell (in Argentina from the age of 16), it is called "emancipation": emancipating a minor = making him free = he can buy and sell. There are many concrete expressions to the effect that the attribute that appears to be natural (it is part of fetishistic consciousness), to be free, always refers to the link with the exchange of commodities. What about the imputability of minors? The minor cannot be expected to act with attributes that are proper to the free individual. Then, due to the concrete forms that the social relationship takes, conditions appear in which one is not a free individual and yet is considered with the consciousness of a free individual and is imputable. In Argentina, now that there is the vote at 16, from 16 to 18, unless he has been emancipated, he is not a free individual, but he is recognized as if he were for a certain type of legal relationship. And all these terms appear as an expression of human freedom. In a year we will see references to the free individual before the capitalist mode of production. The entire legal legal structure is based on the representation that individuals are free by nature. And this will be reflected in the difference between the trial (legal process) in the capitalist mode of production and in feudal society.

The legal fiction in the capitalist mode of production is that everyone is innocent and does not have to prove that they are, you have to prove the opposite. Why this conception? The starting point is: he is a free individual who does the things that correspond to him as such, he has rights and obligations. When the accusation comes, it is: you did not behave as a free individual. And it must be demonstrated. When he is tested in a supposedly rational process that he did not behave as such, then he is told: you do not know how to behave as a free individual and therefore you cannot be among free individuals. We are going to lock you up, but not for punishment, but so that you can relearn how to behave as a free individual. Then the reality of prisons is very far from that discourse, but this is the formality. According to how much he has failed to be a free individual, it is considered that to relearn to behave as such he needs x years. In Argentina, life imprisonment is prohibited, due to the recognition of the natural condition of a free individual: you have to analyze if at some point he learned, you have to evaluate him from time to time, you cannot presume that he will not learn. So this condition is present in all aspects of [capitalist] society.

What was done in feudal society? An individual is given a red-hot iron to grab onto. Because it is not a problem of a free individual who did not know how to behave: either he is in God's grace or not. If he is not, he is demonized. If he is in the grace of God, he will heal the burns caused by the red-hot iron. One has to think that with the filth that was there it was very unlikely that someone would spontaneously heal any wound, so surely everyone who went through that process was out of God's grace. What is the other way? He is loaded with chains and thrown into the river. If it floats it is in the grace of God, if it sinks it is because God did not want to save it. That is the manifest, immediate contrast between a society that sees itself as a society of individuals who are free by nature and a society in which no one is free, all are bound by bonds of personal dependence.

Why is it that in the discussions regarding prison sentences and the imputability of minors, but especially the image of prison as punishment, the "punitivists"[39] cannot argue, only appeal to an emotional question? Because the argument would be to recognize that to be a free individual is to be a subject of indirect social interdependence through things. They can only substantiate it from the legal point of view with immediate statements that this individual is a danger and instead of 5 years he must be locked up 15. Not because he will learn to be free by then, but because he has to be taken out. They can't because it would mean tearing down the entire ideological approach that takes shape in that relationship.

[Answering a question about an individual who believes himself to be alien to society] One cannot wait for others to provide him with the use-values he needs, nor for others to tell him what concrete useful form he has to give to his general capacity to work. One has to behave as a free individual, and the problem one has is that one has to make one's absolute social interdependence spring from one's absolute personal independence. When the individual sees himself as alien to the process of social life, he simply sees himself as abstractly free. That he believes that he lacks an indirect social bond... Nothing, he stopped at the appearance that he is *simply* free. No one is oblivious to the process of social metabolism.

This illusion has the problem that one is already born into a social relationship: biologically it is the product of 2 other human individuals. The illusion that you can be outside would imply that you are an individual who has to go and live in a place where there are no other individuals, which is not very common. But suppose he says: since I am free, I am going to grow my food. In the first place, he knows what a food is because he learned in the process of forming his social being. But suppose I had not had to learn. But to make his food he has to get the seeds, and where are he going to get them from if he doesn't know how to produce them himself? But suppose he is going to say: I am going to eat grass, which occurs in nature. But to grow it you have to use a shovel: but the shovel is the product of social labor, so you can't have a shovel that another individual produced. You could produce your shovel, but to make it you have to have an axe to cut the handle of a tree, but it is also a product of social labor.

There is no individual without a general social bond. What happens to it, and this is one of the most brutal expressions of the capitalist mode of production (and which has to do with the difference between a human need in general and a solvent one) is that, individuals from whom the very general movement of the process of social metabolism takes away the possibility of exercising this indirect link, they are starving. Against the fantasy of those who believe that it is an expression of the fullness of human freedom to go and live in the middle of nowhere fending for themselves, Marx refers to Robinson and says: these are the "Robinsons" of political economy. It is the image that because the individual is free by nature, in his purity he is isolated from the rest of the world. But Marx remarks: he has tools, he knows how to do it, and "since he is English," he says ironically, he has an accounting book to write down the things he is doing. It is a social subject.

[39] Those who think that criminal law should punish. Its counterpart is guarantees.

This purely free individual is the projection of the commodity producer under the guise that he has no social bond whatsoever.

It is not general today to grow one's own food, the spinning to weave one's own clothes, the availability of fuel... They are not made through personal ties. The bonds of personal dependence that remain are subsumed into the general social relation, and the capitalist mode of production tends to dissolve them. Bonds that have an egalitarian, symmetrical character of personal dependence, are bonds that limit universality. Sometimes I put it as having "petty" ties even if it sounds a bit cruel. Because one differentiates in the bonds of personal dependence with respect to the general social relationship. One cares what happens to those individuals with whom one has ties of personal dependence, even if they are of mutual hatred, in the face of indifference to the general social relationship.

In the *Grundrisse* Marx will make this external observation: there are three great stages in the development of human life. 1) One based on the bonds of personal dependence. 2) Based on the indirect social bond, impersonality, the objectification of the social bond. This stage has as its general determination the conditions for a stage 3) in which there are no bonds of personal dependence and yet there are free individuals. We are starting to look at the 2nd, we will look at that later.

[Answering various questions]

If an individual were deprived of the ability to relate to others (indirectly, in the general social relation: producing commodities), if a member of society does not contribute to the production of commodities, the process of social metabolism would be mutilated, and then no one would have an interest in there being someone who does not participate in social production. It is clear that there is a mass of the human population of free individuals who *cannot* "exercise" this generically human condition that is work and that even because of the continuity of this situation cannot even develop the capacity to work, and the social relationship itself is tearing away their "humanity". To get to that there is a lot of development to be done. Up to this point, a society that sacrifices the possibility of having use values because there is a part of the population that, although it may have been or has been in a position, cannot participate in social production seems nonsense. Then we will look at why this is a central concrete form proper to the capitalist mode of production.

We return to the question of consciousness. What the commodity producer has to produce privately and independently is value. So we find that value is not a personal attribute of the producer but a social attribute that the commodity has. In that very act in which he is affirming himself in his fullness as a free individual, what happens to him is that he is carried in this form by the impotence he has to dominate the social determinations of his work, he is absolutely devoid of freedom with respect to the social character of his work. He has to produce value, which is alien to his person, therefore that "free" individual has to act as an individual who is alienated in his commodity, he has to put his conscience and will as a free individual at the service of the social powers that the commodity has, which is not

his person, he has to act as a conscience and will set to satisfy a power that is alien to him. I summarize by saying: his free consciousness is the way in which his alienated consciousness is realized in the commodity. He has to apply all his attributes as a free human subject as if they were attributes of his commodity: he knows that he has to produce value.

I am going to use an expression that Marx does not use in this chapter but does in the prologue to *Capital* and later, which is that the free individual has to act as a *personification* of his commodity. It has to be a conscience and a will that only thinks about producing value. From the point of view of the organization of his individual work as an organ of social labor, he does not count as a person but as a personification: he acted correctly as such if he produced value. Example: When I look at the cook of the gnocchi in the restaurant ($\mathbf{10G = 1S}$) and I look at the person who produces the shoes in the workshop, it may be that the cook is called José, and the shoemaker María, but that is for their personal ties. From the point of view of their condition as organs of the process of social metabolism they act like Mr. Gnocchi and Mrs. Shoes: it does not matter what they are as persons, but as the personification of their commodities. So, now the only way to fully affirm himself in his generically human condition is to deny his human personality in the personal impotence he has to dominate the social determinations of his work by submitting himself to a social power that is alien to his own human person. What is proper to its generic human condition was to be a historical subject (each generation produces the one that follows it), and it is presented to it inverted as an attribute of the social powers that the thing has.

One can see to what extent being able to affirm oneself as a human subject, a person, is subordinate to having first affirmed oneself as the personification of the commodity. That if one has not produced a social use value that carries value, then one cannot affirm oneself as a person by consuming the use values that are the product of social labor. For a father or a mother, affirming oneself in the personal attributes of this condition is to be able to feed children who cannot fend for themselves[40]. And this appears as a personal need. But within the capitalist mode of production, if one first did not produce value (and asserted himself as personification to some extent), he has no capacity to buy the food he is going to give to his children and cannot affirm himself in the condition of being a "good" person. You can be an excellent personification of courage and be rubbish as a person, but the former is a condition of the latter.

Here I am going to appeal to an expression that we have in Argentina which is: "He who has twine does what he wants". The vulgar image of freedom is to do what one wants. In this image you can see that freedom is not a personal attribute, but an attribute that gives one money. One finds in the vulgar conscience the recognition of this determination. Then the economists, etc., come and teach the individual that no, that he is actually free by nature. One could ask, looking at the historical development of humanity, that free individuals appear at a certain moment, and that now that we are finally free, we come to alienate ourselves in the commodity, and it is a misfortune because we cannot fully enjoy our freedom. And

[40] Or bring them good toys for Christmas/Three Kings gift, for example.

one can look at it the other way around and say: I owe my condition as a free individual to producing commodities, if I did not produce them I would have to have ties of personal dependence. When we look at the freedom-alienation relation, the content of the relation is alienation, and the form is freedom. Consequently, one has that freedom is a historical form of social relation. The producer of commodities is the first free human being. And the content of that freedom is alienation in the commodity.

One can see that in Greece there are free individuals, independent producers of commodities, masters of slaves, and that the concept of freedom appears. When did this concept "resurface"? With the French Revolution: "Liberty, equality and fraternity" (which refers to personal ties). Freedom: the human being is proclaimed free by nature. Equality: it appears because we relate through the exchange of equivalents. Where does the discourse that all human beings have been created equal and free appear? Where do constitutions appear where all that appears is: this is a society of mutually free individuals without direct dependence, who converge to form society? This is the Robinson reflected even in the term "Constitution": society is constituted because what is seen is that by nature these individuals have no link with each other and agree to constitute a process of social life. The fullness of the expression of freedom appears at the moment of the birth of the capitalist mode of production. This is Rousseau, the image of the noble savage (free individual). What figure does political economy begin with with Adam Smith? In the rough and primitive state of society... [...]. The image of the natural before this was the grace of God: there are individuals with blue blood and with red blood, there is a difference seen as natural. And all the expressions of the condition of the free individual, its concept, appear as an ideological form proper to the capitalist mode of production.

About the term "subject", it contains this contradictory determination that one is a subject because one is going to act on an object, but is *subject* to determinations. There is no existence devoid of determinations. One can act on a certain thing because one has the powers to act on that thing. But freedom appears conceived as the absence of determination. A crude example: I can declare myself free from the force of gravity, because if I were determined by it I would not be free. I get on a plane that is 3000m high, I open the door and I jump because I don't accept that gravity dominates me. And I will be able to enjoy very little time the discovery that my body is determined by gravity, it is one of its forms of existence. When am I *free* from the force of gravity? When, recognizing the determinations of gravity, I put on a parachute, I get on the plane and jump with it and I am free because I make gravity work according to my end, and I arrive on the ground perfectly healthy. So I am not free when I ignore my determinations: on the contrary. I vindicate an expression of Engels in the *Anti-Dühring* that freedom is the known necessity. If I know my need, my determinations, I can make them come true by satisfying my own end, and then I am free. If I do not know my determinations, I will act blindly and I will not be aiming for the realization of my end because I do not know what my end is.

The commodity producer cannot see himself as an organ in the process of social metabolism, he sees himself as an individual who is forced to interdepend with

others. [...], lacking determination. Social interdependence appears to him in the fact that others have the power to decide whether or not what one freely did was useful to them through exchange. Then this appears as a mutilation of natural freedom, every limitation that is imposed on my person is external to me. And it is the other way around: I am an individual organ of an organic unit, only that as a producer of commodities I cannot directly recognize myself in that condition and I look at myself the other way around: it is imposed on me. And brought to my own person I have to act as a moral individual. If they let me go free, what do I care about others: I am bothered by a person who I pass in the street and shoot him because he is attacking my freedom. But it seems to me that I can't do it because morally it's wrong. And that is the concrete form of consciousness. Everything that appears to me "from outside", all determination, is something that limits me in my condition as a free individual.

When one looks at the primitive community, what one sees is the community that has different individual organs that are its members, not isolated individuals, devoid of bonds. When one looks at the capitalist mode of production, there is no community: what one immediately sees are isolated individuals. Why do they appear like this? First, because they have no direct personal ties. How then do they act as individual organs? Indirectly in the production and exchange of commodities. Then, their social interdependence appears as something that is external, that is not inherent to the human being because that exteriority is carried in a relationship between things in his labor process.

It is easy to say: "those other individuals who walk around in the corridors or on the street are all alienated, but I am a free individual, it is not true that my consciousness is an attribute of the commodity." And here what we are looking at is: "Yes: my consciousness is alienated in the commodity." And the problem is to recognize oneself as a carrier, we are not talking about other individuals, we are talking about ourselves. And this is to think about very calmly, with a lot of anguish in general... But we are faced with this. I will leave a question for the next one: what is Chapter I of *Capital* about? In the next session we can move on to chapter II or focus on the concrete forms that commodity fetishism takes (e.g., the legal relations that we saw naturalizing human freedom, vulgar consciousness...), for example psychoanalytic theory. And another question is what happens so that a work whose subtitle is "Critique of Political Economy" adopts a conception that is "critical political economy" or "Marxist political economy" in which there are two main lines.

[Alienation and fragmentation of the sciences]

The problem of consciousness is not that others have it and I don't: the problem that others have is exactly the same as the one I have. This appears a lot in the discussions of organizations that have immediate political action as their objective, where this thing appears: we have a revolutionary consciousness because we are free individuals, but the others are alienated and the problem is how we make others stop having an alienated consciousness.

Javiera: I think this confronts you with the anguish of who you are. I was a militant for many years in a Guevarist organization in Chile and those were years of militancy where it was said that we had to go to the territories, to the populations (slums) to awaken consciousness. We were a bit like the enlightened ones who were going to lower the programmatic lines, politics, very much supported by this idea of Lukács, of going to generate class consciousness. When I read Marx and at the same time this little text of yours from *Knowing Capital*, this "We are free because we are alienated" was a shot in the head. It was obviously the confrontation with the anguish of political action, and that is what Marx confronts you all the time in *Capital*, your own political action, how you advance in that and recognize yourself in that social relationship.

JIC: When one knows that one is alienated, one has advanced in one's freedom because now one knows a determination that the fetishist conscience does not know. If I know my necessity (which is not simple) in the form of possibility, as a necessity to be realized, as it exists at present, and advance in the knowledge of my determinations, I can govern my action more freely than when I knew no determination. In this case, knowing oneself as the bearer of an alienated consciousness because it is the way in which one produces oneself as an organ of the process of social metabolism, fetishism ended: I no longer face my product as having the *natural power* to dominate me. That does not mean that I am not alienated, but that I am alienated and recognize myself in my alienation. The capitalist mode of production can never cease to have a free consciousness because it is alienated, but it can cease to have a fetishistic consciousness. And to discover the fetishistic character of consciousness one needs an objective consciousness. There is no doubt that I am subject to the commodity. Then I can think that this is so by nature and I cannot do anything, or say: no, why am I subjected to this social power that has the product of my conscious and voluntary action? What is the determination of my subjectivity? Why can I face that, does the fact that I wonder about it have to spring from my alienated consciousness?

What is what we have seen so far about? Within Marxism there are various approaches. One is that *Capital is* a book of critical political economy, despite the fact that the title says that it is the *critique of political economy*. They are not the same because political economy is the object of criticism, and the object of "critical political economy" is not political economy. I am going to summarize it in two proposals. Althusser's statement appears very expressively in this: there is a pre-Marxist, Hegelian Marx, who speaks of alienation; and there is a "Marxist" Marx who deals with political economy. To the point of saying: the 1st section of Volume

I should not be read (this is in a prologue of his to a French edition), it must be skipped because if not, nothing is understood. In *To Read Capital* he says that it is a book on economics, which until now we have read as philosophers. And in contrast to this, and almost contemporaneously, Sartre's approach appears: the young Marx was concerned with alienated consciousness, he spoke of alienation, etc., and due to the bad influences of Engels he put that aside and now he speaks of the economy, he no longer speaks of consciousness.

Thomas: Both make this separation, the young Marx and the adult, in relation to the historical "discovery" of the young Marx with the publication of the *Manuscripts*. But they do so from radically different positions: anti-humanism vs. humanism.

JIC: One may wonder why there is a historical moment where this fragmentation and the image of two different Marxes arises, but I used them more than anything else to mark the contrast of the positions that appear.

What are we facing in the face of these proposals? When we start with the commodity, it seems that he is referring to what was the axis of classical political economy. When he begins with the analysis of the commodity and starts with use-value, he has the structure with a very different development but similar to Smith's, because for him also wealth first and foremost (although he does not speak of the commodity as its form) is the mass of use-values that society has at its disposal when it produces it. And after looking at that, at one point he says (what was called "Smith's paradox") that there are things that have a high use value but low exchange value and others that are dispensable with very high exchange value. So in Smith there is also structure (although in the medium he naturalized commodities, private labor, the consciousness of the producer of commodities...), but it has that point and one can recognize it in Marx where he says: we already look at all the use value, but *in this society* they have this other attribute (that which for Smith is natural). Then comes the analysis of exchange value and value. And it seems to continue in the theme of political economy.

Once this development is completed, with money, etc., the question arises: and what is the consciousness of these individuals who essentially produce commodities? We said: consciousness is the way in which each individual governs his or her action, recognizing himself or herself as an organ of the process of social metabolism. It is: how each individual carries his capacity to know himself as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism and consequently to govern his action as a social subject. We saw that the producer of commodities in order to recognize himself as such cannot look at his person because he has no direct social relationship, he is an individual free of ties of personal dependence. It is not in his person: it is in his commodity, one looks at it and sees that it produced value and acted "correctly" as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism.

Now we go back to the beginning of the development, the first paragraph, what he is looking at is *how his consciousness operates*, he is talking about the subjectivity of the commodity producer, not about an abstract economic relationship, a subject of political economy. The criticism of political economy is

that it naturalizes free consciousness and therefore cannot recognize itself in its concrete determination as an organ of the process of social life. So, one finds that from the outset I was wondering what form my consciousness and my will have, and consequently what form my condition as a historical subject has. One is seeing that the economic relationship is the way in which one's social bond operates, and consequently in which one governs one's own conscious and voluntary action. Now we recognize that we are taking a small step forward in our freedom because we know we are alienated, and then we are transforming ourselves, developing in our own condition as historical subjects. So, it is not a book about economics but about our own subjectivity (as we saw in Session 1).

[...] Here we find the fullness of the alienated consciousness, and consequently of its form as free consciousness.

Gonzalo: Why does Althusser separate the adult and the young Marx in a fragmentary way, when perhaps Marx at the time implied totality? Why say if *Capital* is a book on economics or a book that asks about subjectivity?]

JIC: I propose this. When one wonders about one's subjectivity, one wonders about the whole of its process of existence as a living subject, and not only as an individual living subject, but also its generic existence. When one asks oneself to know—and one always does, even if it seems distant—one is always asking oneself what potentialities one has with respect to the object on which one proposes (let's take it abstractly) to act. Knowledge is always knowledge of one's own subjectivity, which is in turn knowledge of the whole. It does not exclude that one looks at the form that the exercise of one's subjectivity has, the way in which one realizes one's social being (when one speaks of subjectivity one is talking about one's social being), in what are called "economic relations", "political relations", etc. One is always talking about one's subjectivity.

One can face (we will see much later) a place where disciplinary fragmentation appears crudely. I refer you to Marx's statement in the *Manuscripts* of 1844 where he speaks of the fragmentation of science and goes on to say: sometime there will be only one science, the natural science of humanity, or the human science of nature[41]. The first meeting we began by looking at the immediate forms of our action and, talking about what to do, we stood before the commodity. And now we see how far it is within our "what to do." And we never jumped from one discipline to another, we were always looking at the unity of our condition as subjects. This fragmentation is characteristic of the science of the capitalist mode of production, which fragments everything. Why does he have this need?

When one says that there is a fetishistic consciousness, there comes the need to fragment, because if I don't, I discover myself in my fetishistic consciousness. If I fragment and start in chapter IV, I will never discover that in the fullness of my condition as a free individual, devoid of any bond, even cooperation with others, from there arises alienation, at that moment. When one starts from Chapter IV, it may seem that the alienation of the worker is a consequence of the existence of

[41] Marx's quote: "Someday natural science will be incorporated into the science of man, just as the science of man will be incorporated into natural science; there will be only one Science".

capital, and what Marx is going to emphasize is that alienation has nothing to do with wage labor: it has to do with private labor. What we look at in the first chapter is the purity of private labor, and in it is alienation.

So, these questions of fragmentation, of saying, "This is about consciousness and it has nothing to do with what follows" (or vice versa), are the ways of reproducing a consciousness that stops at appearances, that cuts out its object and does not go beyond the different appearances that that object presents to it. If I skip this first part like Althusser and go to look at the worker, and the worker no longer has full control over his individual labor, it seems to me that he could be a fully free individual but his natural freedom was taken away from him, and now alienation is a problem of wage labor. But if I start from the beginning, there is no such thing as natural freedom. What exists is a historical form of social relation that has the form of freedom, whose content is alienation. It is not the problem of overcoming the capitalist mode of production by rescuing a natural freedom that is dominated. In Althusser, although he does not say so, when he speaks of the "ideological apparatuses of the state" it is: the child comes with a naturally free consciousness, and there he is conditioned to serve capital. No, the child does not come with a naturally free consciousness "disturbed" by this process: he comes with the consciousness that is proper to a society of commodity producers. He has not the slightest idea of what a commodity is, nor does he participate in its production process, but the formation of his consciousness is that of a commodity producer.

Gonzalo [on Althusser's guide to reading Capital] [...] It was written in 1969[42], in the heat of the events of the French May. I found it interesting to think, following the line of fragmentation and unity, how these historical events are sometimes described. Because it is common to argue that in these events there was on the one hand the working class, on the other hand the students, on the other the philosophers, without recognizing themselves as the whole of the working class, of those who sell their labor power.

JIC: [...] There is a question that I am going to mark the contrast with respect to what an objective representation of current science would imply. I'm going to take the value form. We looked at the commodity and said that no one by itself can express its value, it has to express it in quantities of the body of another commodity; and that none is immediately changeable, must first prove that it has value. We begin to look at the form of the equivalent and come to a point where we find money, which is a commodity — gold — which, as such, has no other attributes than another and yet is immediately exchangeable for any other. I look at gold and I don't see magnitude of value, but I do see value. In a logical representation, in the simplest model, that should have led us to say: well, the observation we made at the start was false, it is false that commodities are not immediately changeable because there is one at least that is. This is what Hume would say about the black swan, so the theory that swans are white is false. Here it is the other way around: we were deploying that simpler determination that could not be expressed, and when we were deploying it and accompanying the movement it has, we reached a point where we said: it is expressed like this.

[42] Actually it came out in 1965, the 1969 translation was the translation of FCE. He may be referring to *Ideology and Ideological Apparatuses of the State (notes for research),* from 1970.

And we are going to see this throughout the development as we progress: something that at the beginning was presented to us and we knew it (it was not that we were deceiving ourselves) in its simplest determination, and as we progressed we saw how it was taking concrete forms that are the opposite of what appeared in the simple form. And that (this is premature) if we had stopped at the first step and said that so far it is clear, no commodity can express value by itself... If we had stopped at an appearance, we would have turned this development of our knowledge into an abstraction. The same thing, on the contrary, would have happened to us if when we got to money we had taken a step that is: what is money? It is gold, which is immediately changeable. And if we had stopped our analysis there, we would have stopped at an appearance.

The problem is that one has to arrive in the analysis to the simplest specific form of what is going to be deployed, but then one has to do the deployment. That if one stops where one found the simplest form, everything that concludes that this simplest form only exists under its concrete forms, what one is going to do is to construct an appearance, to stop at it. Either because one stopped the analysis prematurely, or because one stopped the unfolding of the necessity which one found in the simplest form before the point at which one has to account for the necessity of one's own action. Because one is always organizing one's action, where one stopped is that one completed the organization of the action, which is subject to one stopping at an abstraction.

[Question from Jhova about Marx's reference to "natural history," like Darwin's, which dealt with evolution from simple to complex forms] I associate the reference to a human natural history in the prologue of the 1st edition. It says [with corrections by JIC to the 21st century edition]:

> My point of view, according to which ~~I conceive~~ [confront myself] as a process of development of the economic formation of society as a process of natural history [...][43].

The human being is a form of nature, as every living form is a subject of nature, and it is like when in the *Manuscripts* he refers to human natural history. Because it is a natural process of human life, which is another issue that caused a commotion in some workshops. But everything we are doing here are processes of a natural nature, which we differentiate as belonging to the human race as social processes, but they are natural (thought, speech, etc.) of a historical subject – which produces itself from one generation to another in a conscious and voluntary way. So there is the risk of attributing to natural forms the conditions that are proper to human processes (of social forms) and vice versa, attributing to social forms the condition of being abstractly natural.

When political economy begins by saying that it is natural to exchange a beaver for two deer, it is a naturalization. Now, that process of human life is a natural process that takes the form of a social relationship. That is why I refuse to use the term "social" for animal relationships, even if they are relationships between individuals. But one can naturalize in both ways. One is to attribute to it what is the *natural historical* process of development of the human being, and to look at it as if

[43] The quote is found in the prologue to the 1st German edition of *Capital*. In FCE it is like a "historical-natural process".

it were an abstractly natural process, not subject to change by human conscious and voluntary action itself (because animal action also transforms conditions but not consciously). So there is this natural process that takes concrete forms that one identifies as social, and there are the links between individual organs of whatever animal species, which have a natural character. With the development of what happens on the earth's surface by action or omission of human labor, these natural characteristics are transformed by human labor. A dog is the product of human labor, of our condition as a historical subject. But what happens to the dog I am going to refer to as a natural process, and what happens to the human being who domesticated the dog, is a process of a social nature.

[The story is mentioned that Marx would have proposed dedicating Volume 1 of Capital to Darwin, but this is a mistake[44].]

Arturo: One thing that I see that Marx is criticized a lot is that we are historical subjects. I once said it in class and they called me an "evolutionist", as if it had a linear character alien to all social ups and downs and therefore naturalized all that.

JIC: I've been told that a lot of times. That way of looking is (in very abstract terms) the need to feed the image of an abstractly free consciousness, its cultivation. To say that each human generation finds itself and produces its life from a world that has been materially transformed by the previous generation is an observation, it is not even a reasoning, even immediate observation can realize that. To think that this is deterministic is typical of the capitalist mode of production, it is to think that there is no social being, that individuals are abstractly free, etc.

Arturo: Marx said that men make their history, but in conditions not chosen by them. There are many people who forget that part, they believe that we are masters and lords of our destiny and we mold it as we want, which is a denial of history. What I said is that they told me that this is naturalizing history. I had a teacher who said: social phenomena must be explained, as Durkheim says, with social explanations. And that when one introduces Marxism and the relations between man and nature, one is looking at nature and not at society, and then they challenged Marxism for being a mixture between nature and history. So I brought you this anecdote because it seems to me that it is something very widespread in academia.

JIC: It is absolutely widespread.

[Xatan asks about the question of determinism. JIC refers again to the issue of simple and complex necessity, Laplace, Hume, positivism...]. If we look at when the cult of indeterminacy emerged, there is an expression that was shocking to me many years ago. Throughout the empire of scientific positivism, in the most extreme cases he said that everything is a simple determination, but positivism also appears with possibility, but it is determined. When does the fear of determination appear? Positivism is the expression of the development of the

[44] See: https://www.lahaine.org/mundo.php/darwin-marx-y-las-dedicatorias.

sciences in the capitalist mode of production. From positivism springs all the technical development of production and so on. Before the development of capitalism Hume had already written this about the swans, and it is very remarkable because Comte (father of positivism) reads Hume and could not understand what he is saying about the fact that the form of knowledge that is going to be raised in positivism cannot account for the need. When did that which did not exist for science begin to be the axis of the problem of science? It appears in Popper.

What does it react to? Popper says: you can't know objectively, all you can do is interpret. Later postmodernism develops it more and more and accepts this, etc. Popper writes this when he sees the Soviet Union, which from his point of view and that of the USSR itself, is the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. What scares you? That indeed, science was what guided the action of the working class, and that science says that this is going towards the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. And if he says that, then he can no longer have certainties, all possibility of knowledge of the determinations must be liquidated. What should be done? It must be called "determinism". And it is not determinism: scientific socialism is the objective knowledge of the determinations of the working class as a historical subject. And that's where the horror of determination comes from. Why is it opposed to utopian socialism? Because now it is not a knowledge that is based on an abstract free subjectivity, but has an objective character, which explains why one has the subjectivity that one has. And this frightens the ideological production of the capitalist mode of production, and begins to say that any claim to know objectively is a claim to oppress others. Something that was very present in the 90s and is still present[45].

[Xatan insists on why the working class will not want to maintain capitalism. Xatan explains it in terms of morality.]

The explanation for why the working class is going to overcome capitalism is all of Volume 1, it is still missing. We ask ourselves about our action, about our "what to do". And what we find so far is a conscious and voluntary doing. When one begins to ask oneself about the determinations of one's action – that is to know – that is, about the simplest determination of one's subjectivity, and we arrive at the commodity, at a free consciousness because it is alienated: one is confronted with one's own product as a power that one cannot control. If there were a will that did not spring from this simpler determination, it must have appeared earlier. Everything that can spring from here from the specificity of human subjectivity in the capitalist mode of production, as the bearer of its supersession, emerged from here. Otherwise, we would have had to find another general social relationship, and there isn't. That would be personal ties, but here they are subject to this impersonal relationship. If this does not include the potential to overcome the capitalist mode of production, we are fried, because our will will never need to confront and overcome it.

Xatan: What I don't understand is why he has the need in the first place.

[45] They name Dario Sztajnszrajber and JIC says, "no, but that's for domestic consumption."

JIC: The answer is: let's look. So far we cannot even say that we have the need to overcome it, quite the contrary: all we know so far is that we are going to produce commodities indefinitely. Let us see if at some point we find that the capitalist mode of production can revolutionize itself and produce revolutionary subjectivities—that transformation can only take concrete form in the action of individuals with revolutionary consciousness and will—or whether it is powerless to revolutionarily transform itself. So far what we can say is: only from this simpler determination can the possibility arise, the need to overcome it.

Xatan: We cannot separate ourselves from capitalism.

JIC: *We are* capitalism.

Xatan: What we cannot say is that the transformation of capitalism is a direct product of capitalism, because it seems to me that it separates the subject from his or her potential when it comes to transforming society. I would talk about another series of questions that I mentioned before to explain why the subject takes a conscious action to transform society into something totally different, including the context in which it finds itself, that this "free consciousness" is the product of the alienation of the commodity etc., obviously it is acted within capitalist society...

JIC: So, let's look at where this is leading us with respect to the development of our social being. So far this is what I found as the reason for my doing. I understand that you propose morality as the reason for doing. What we will do in the next session is to see that morality is a form of social relation proper to the capitalist mode of production, it is the form of free consciousness that cannot be recognized in its alienation, but that is alienated.

Xatan: I disagree. But I do not speak of morality in the abstract, I conceive it with specific characteristics, that is, the morality of human thought, of human reason.

JIC: Let's look at what morality and ethics are, when and where the concept of morality and ethics arise.

Xatan: The concept and morality are not the same, it does not imply that morality existed only at that time.

JIC: So far in this development it has not appeared.

Xatan: I think it is implicit in Marx.

JIC: Marx in *The Holy Family* says at one point: it doesn't matter what this proletarian thinks what he should do, or whether the proletariat as a whole thinks what he should do. What matters is what the proletariat *is going to do for what it is*.

Xatan: But it doesn't explain what it is.

JIC: The question is what it is, what is social being. And let's continue to look at the social being.

[Morals and ethics]

[He recapitulates the determinations of the practical consciousness of the commodity producer that we have seen so far: the power that governs his personal determination is not personal, he sees him as an external power, an imposed social interdependence that limits his condition as a free individual.]

The only way to make its absolute interdependence emerge from its absolute independence (for even the consumption of each one depends on that of others) is to clash with that interdependence which appears to it externally. What he is going to do is to produce his subjectivity by incorporating over what was presented to him as his condition as a naturally free individual a social interdependence that is based on what it should be: the *duty to be* moral. A free individual does not go around killing other free individuals, does not steal, etc. So, in his own consciousness, what is going to operate is this way of looking at himself: I am a free individual and I do the things that are proper to free individuals. Not only does it appear as a "ought to be" that each individual carries with him, but just as it is a social bond that appears determined externally to the natural freedom of the individual, it appears as morality, as an external, objectified existence, to which the human being in his condition as a free individual, conforms.

I am then a moral being and I behave towards other individuals in a way that has the character of a relationship in which there are rights and obligations. Morality tells the individual what rights and obligations he has. And the most expressive popular expression of these determinations of conscience is that image that the right of each one ends where the right of others begins[46]. It expresses the impossibility of seeing oneself as an individual organ of a collective because one has to see oneself as an individual devoid of ties to others. What will appear is how the relationship is established: what one has to do with respect to others is to adjust one's behavior as a free individual to this impersonal bond that corresponds to that of commodities. Again, because it is not that one chooses whether one has morality or not: the individual has morality, and the one who does not behave morally, his social interdependence will now appear openly imposed externally in the form of justice. Because he did not know how to behave as a moral individual, he lost his natural freedom and has to be separated from society until he recovers his condition as a free individual adjusted to morality. Morality then takes the form of a general enunciation of this moral duty to be which is ethics. Ethics, projected this behavior of individuals, is ideologically represented as: well, this is a human being by nature. [...]

Personal freedom, independence from other human beings, arises from having full control over one's own individual labor, and only the commodity producer has it. And the universe of commodity producers only develops in the capitalist mode of production. Then all the discussions about ethics appear, which already appear in classical Greece and Rome where there is a certain production of commodities, but they appear fully where the capitalist mode of production is developed. Rousseau appears: the human being in nature is a free individual. There are

[46] I have heard it as "The freedom of each one...".

several versions: 1) unfortunately he renounces his freedom and enters into bonds of interdependence; 2) as a free individual, as he has no limit, *homo homini lupus*[47], and in order to control himself he needs to enter into this bond that limits his condition of freedom. They are the two forms of consciousness in the capitalist mode of production that represent what the human being is, and it is said that it is so by nature.

When one looks at Smith's account of the rough and primitive state of society with hunters who exchange, the problem is what is fair in exchange. And Smith goes on to say: it is in human nature that in order to satisfy his personal interest he has to satisfy the personal interest of others because there is a natural propensity, etc. This is at the foundation of the entire judicial structure, except for lines that, as they have to face each other in practice, state that only the regulations are of interest, which is so because it is the regulations. But the ethical foundation of law, the philosophy of law, begins with natural freedom.

Xatan: Do you understand that morality has its origin in this dissolution of the bonds of personal dependence?

JIC: In other forms of society where bonds of personal dependence prevail, the first thing that happens to the individual is that he will never be able to be seen as free because he is not: he immediately knows that he is the individual organ of a community, he is the bearer of a social bond. It does not seem to him that this social interdependence arises from outside himself. If we are going to call "moral" something that is proper to a free individual... Because this is also how discussions appear in ethics: it is a problem of the free individual, of someone who can buy and sell. That is why minors could not be judged morally, they are not considered free, although individuals can be forced to judge as "something moral" when they are at a certain age. From the point of view of legal philosophy, the lowering of the age of imputability is an aberration.

Xatan: I, at least, separate morality, although it is related to the legal part in which the most general moral ideas are reinforced, but I understand morality beyond legal relations. And I don't understand why a slave shouldn't have conceptions about what is right or wrong, etc.

JIC: In these societies the question does not appear as a moral question. Historically, we speak of morality or ethics when we speak of the conditions proper to free individuals. The individual of the social form where relations of personal dependence prevail, as the bearer of his bonds of personal dependence, sees himself as an individual who has the potentiality to do this or that, but he is not judging him morally, he is recognizing himself in his condition as an immediately social subject. It is not seen as a moral problem, but a religious one in many forms of society.

An anecdote: when I was a child, in elementary school there were classes on compulsory religion, and those of us who came from non-religious families had

[47] Reference to Hobbes.

classes on morals. But I take it as this: there is a religious conception that says what an individual should do, but he is not a moral subject: he is a religious individual, who sins, lacks the condition of creature of divinity. It is a different way of governing action, which has a different name in the historical development determined as the capitalist mode of production. Why should we project backwards or forwards the concrete way of governing the individual action of the capitalist mode of production, would it not be attributing the proper of the mode of production to human nature?

[Xatan asks why it would not be moral, if in religion there is a conception of good and evil]

JIC: I would make two comments. The issue of good and evil is a proposal that leads me to think about naturalization. You said: there was the belief in spontaneous generation until it is discovered that it is not that. The problem is that this is a belief that existed in human beings regarding how life was generated. It is not that before there was spontaneous generation and now it is generated in another way. Before there was one form of social relationship and now there is another form of social relationship. The question is whether I have to use the name of a social relationship that is proper to a society to refer to... I would never put it as "good or bad" but as obligations and rights. And another thing: it is clear that the social division of labor is born with humanity: that some individuals gave the product of their labor to others to consume it and others to the former for the same purpose. For it is clear that in hunter-gatherer society, hunters give the foragers the product of their labor and vice versa. And on that basis one finds all the time the proposition that the production of commodities is the natural form of the organization of human life because there has always been exchange, a *propensity to change*. And one finds this in neoclassical economics: the problem in any mode of production is how scarce resources are allocated to satisfy multiple purposes. But it is the specificity that one has to look at. I don't want to convince anyone of anything, everyone has to look at it and face it as they take it and see where what is being proposed leads.

Javiera: I have 5 years of training in non-capitalist societies in anthropology. There is a classic example of Marcel Mauss's exchange, the gift, where the different tribes of an island had to exchange certain objects, and the tribes knew that if they gave them something and the others did not return reciprocally, that was going to imply a kind of offense and there was not going to be an exchange from then on. Indeed, the last thing you said Juan about specificity, beyond the fact that both knew that they had to comply with that exchange, it could be said that there was a "morality" between them, but that was not carried in the individual. It was not something of the person, it was an attribute that was carried in the collective, it was tribe A that was unrelated to tribe B, not a specific subject. So perhaps we should think about what society Xatan you are imagining because if not, every society before capital had morals... But what specific society? In this example, morality, ethics was not carried in the subject, there was no free subject as the bearer of that morality that was going to be associated with that collectivity.

Xatan: I understand morality to be a set of collective thoughts. When I say that it is present in all societies, it is that I do not understand what is the society in which there is not an ideology that has been "collectivized" in a certain way. Morality, the ideology about what is or is not correct, even if there is no legal manifestation, an organism that reproduces it, that is practically intrinsic to the human being, does not originate from capitalism independently.

[Psychoanalytic theory]

The other step I proposed to you is to look very quickly at how psychoanalytic theory looks at this. Freud has several works where he looks at different questions regarding what subjectivity is, which he sees as human subjectivity. And he is going to state that the first thing in the human being is pure instinct (or drive), and that it is the principle of pleasure: to satisfy all the desires that the individual has. If we see this in parallel with the commodity producer, this is looking at the human being as free by nature. What problem does this individual have who pursues the pleasure principle unlimitedly? That *externally*, it clashes with reality, which puts limits on its freedom to satisfy its desires. Faced with this clash, where social interdependence appears as something external to human subjectivity, that subject who was pure instinct (and Freud calls it: the *id*), has to limit it by incorporating into his subjectivity the *moral superego*, which tells the individual that he wants to unleash the pleasure principle and cannot do so because of the reality principle. it is what is right and wrong, what you should do and what you should not.

The way in which Freud is going to synthesize what we propose about free consciousness because it is alienated, is that the *ego* is a third party, because it cannot be seen as a movement that has a content whose form is the opposite of its content. So it's going to look at it as 3 psychic instances. There is the *id*, pure instinct that is in the unconscious, the *superego* that is the *duty to be* moral, and the *ego* that has to manage the permanent fight between the *id* and the *superego*. What is being represented as inherent in human nature? That starting point of: "I am a free individual by nature" is the *id* with its principle of unrestricted pleasure. The superego is my alienation, the capacity to govern my action is not proper to my person, I have to incorporate it and restrain my *id*. Subjectivity is a permanent contradiction between these separate instances. And he is going to say in a funny and ironic phrase: poor *me*, who spends his time negotiating between the *id*, the *superego* and reality. Then it is again the image of an alienated consciousness put as if it were a natural condition.

There is a point at which Freud says: this is what happens to the individual, but why is it so? So, remembering Popper, what had to happen to the subjectivity of an individual like Freud, who saw that what was coming was Nazism after a war of ferocious brutality? There he asks: why does the human being have this form of subjectivity? And he is going to look for the explanation like classical economics. The explanation has its origin in a myth: just as for Smith there is a rude and primitive state of society, for Freud it is the *primitive horde* in which the father of

the horde had subjugated the sons[48], who appear as the brothers, and these generate hatred towards the father and kill him. And from that moment on, in order to protect each other, to be able to inhibit that "natural" desire to annihilate the other, they resolve to set a limit, which is external to what each of them would do for himself. And this limit is the development of culture. Then the origin of consciousness is explained in a mythical way. It is in naturalization what Freud says when he confronts the Soviet Union in *The Malaise in Culture*: he says that he cannot make a critique of communist economics, that he cannot investigate whether the abolition of private property is opportune and convenient, "[...] but on the other hand I can recognize his psychological hypothesis as a vain illusion. It is true that by abolishing private property, one of its instruments is removed from human aggressiveness, certainly a very strong one, but by no means the strongest of all. However, nothing will have changed with this in the differences in power and influence that aggressiveness takes advantage of for its purposes. Nor will the essence of it have been changed. The inexhaustible intrinsic tendencies of human nature would not fail to follow them [individuals in this society] either." With which the consciousness of the capitalist mode of production appears as a natural form of human consciousness.

Freud is taking the Viennese "petty bourgeois" of the early twentieth century and says: this is the human being. Just as Smith takes the English capitalist but then disguises him as a baker, brewer and butcher (independent producers of commodities) and says: this is the human being, and there has been nothing else in human history and there can be no other. It was rare for factory workers to have access to that. The Viennese petty bourgeoisie is a mixture of merchants, intellectuals... The Catholic individual, as a producer of commodities, has a strong conflict with himself: I have to do this as a free individual, but I must not because I clash with others. So how would the Catholic deal with his anguish of the struggle between the id and the superego? Through confession to the priest. All those contradictory thoughts are not seen as a problem of whether I am free or not, but of whether it is sin or not. The priest gives him a penance (that he prays *x* things), the individual prays and his anguish, although it does not disappear (because it is typical of an individual who carries an alienated conscience), will be attenuated.

I go to an even simpler form: the individual who is distressed and wonders why he is doing to relieve it. He goes to the healer and says: they gave you an evil eye, and you have to do these things to counteract it. And the individual does it, and if he has faith in the healer he relieves his anguish. So, now we have a small merchant who is not illiterate, and being told that he has had an evil eye, etc., is not the way in which that individual can identify himself and reproduce alienation (I need the other to help me transform my subjectivity because I cannot solve it). He goes to the priest and it doesn't correspond to him either. It is psychoanalysis that corresponds to a consciousness accustomed to "intellectual" work. And Freud states it very clearly. What it says is: when you do the process of analysis, it's a rational process. But the cure does not spring from the rational process: this is the vehicle for the cure. The key to the cure is transference, an affective bond between the analysand and the analysand. Which implies that the psychoanalyst is

[48] And it monopolized the females.

recognized as having something that is external to him: the capacity to intervene externally so that the individual governs the reproduction of his alienation, but by putting the figure of that alienation not in a "negative" but in a "positive" figure, he is going to transform himself. So it is a way for a subject to develop his subjectivity, which is proper to the capitalist mode of production and to a certain degree, certain moments, certain forms of the capitalist mode of production.

Lacan begins by criticizing this myth, saying that it is not an explanation. And what he is going to ask is: Where does human nature end? The human being is a prisoner of the word. Which is the development of the objectification of thought that is carried in the development of the productive forces of labor, and appears as if it were the negation of that natural human condition. And now the human subject is a prisoner of his production, of the word as an absolute, even if it is the way to coordinate social labor. And that word is the word of the law. What law, what is the law? I am skipping many intermediate steps, but if I jump to the next one, what appears is that the problem is not the omnipotence of the subject, which is the image of the abstractly free individual by nature, devoid of any determination. The problem is that the individual is subject to the omnipotence of the *Other*.

Who is the other? It is the one that the commodity producer confronts as the bearer of the ability to recognize whether what he did is socially useful work or not, whether he acted as an organ of the unity of social life or has not acted correctly. Then absolute interdependence appears as external: it is the other, not as an organ of oneself. The omnipotence of the other will develop with a series of intermediate steps in which it will appear that the subject is always missing something. And what it lacks is "object A." [49]What does the commodity producer lack, how does he deal with that which dominates him? It is an object that he always lacks because it is always outside his own subjectivity. What is going to appear in this (with more complexity, I tried to synthesize it), is back (although now it is not a myth): there is the word, and since this exists it is the human being: a subject that seems to him to be the bearer of his omnipotence but that in reality is that of the *Other*, this human being always lacks this object A that he cannot reach (I think I skipped a part but...).

Making the same type of observation with respect to Freud, Lacan is asked if the capitalist mode of production can be overcome at a peculiar moment, during May 1968. There are two aspects, one is from a text prior to 68, in which it says: "In

[49] Lacan: "The object A is that by which the speaking being, when it is captured in discourses, is determined. He does not know at all what it determines: it is object **A**. In what is determined, it is determined as a subject, that is, it is divided as a **subject** and is the prey of **desire**. [...] that is, it has its effects from which what we call '**phantom**' is constituted, that is, the relationship between object A, which is what is found from the defect of discourse to cause desire [**JIC:** what is outside the person, is the commodity] and that which condenses around it like a cleft that is called 'subject'. It is a cleft because object A is always between each of the signifiers and the one that follows."

JIC: So, with respect to subjectivity, the possibility of satisfying it appears, the determination of subjectivity is outside subjectivity, in this object A. I don't know if that image that there is a thing, an object that determines the subject and he cannot dominate, was clearer. In what society is that object? In that in which the social relation is established through commodities, that object separated from my person.

what way can one overcome the alienation of one's work? It is as if they wanted to overcome the alienation of discourse. I see in order to overcome this alienation only the object that supports value, what Marx called in a singularly anticipated homonymy of psychoanalysis: the *fetish*. [...][50]. So, what appears here is that fetishistic consciousness is a problem of a biological nature. And the answer he gives to the question of overcoming the capitalist mode of production, synthesized, is:

> [...] In any case, man cannot aspire to be integral to the 'total personality' (another premise in which modern psychotherapy deviates). In any case, man cannot aspire to be integral from the moment in which in the game of displacement and condensation to which he is destined in the exercise of his functions, he marks his relationship with the signifier.

The first reference to the signifier is the *law*, it begins with this development. Then, the biological, natural character of this form of human consciousness and the impossibility of advancing beyond ... When he speaks of the signifier that is the law, it is something that is external to my subjectivity and that is imposed on me. There is a naturalization: this is eternal since human beings developed the word.

[Speaking of naturalization] The human being, first of all [in this image], is omnipotent, but he is subject to the omnipotence of others. But this omnipotence of others is not expressed as a personal power. This abstractly free individual clashes with these others, how do these others (the unit of the process of social metabolism) express their omnipotence over this individual? Not on a personal basis, it is not that this oppression has a personal character, but that it takes the concrete form of being mediated by an object. The commodity producer has to act as if he were free by nature, his social interdependence appears to him as something external, but it is not that others subjugate him personally: it is the commodity (or money) of others that tells whether or not this individual can satisfy his personal needs. This is present for everyone in the capitalist mode of production, whether they have private ownership of the means of production or not. The capitalist is not excluded from this form of subjectivity, not even in Lacan's approach, but for him this is natural.

I want to make a caveat. Just as classical political economy naturalizes capitalist social relations, it is a form of consciousness capable of governing an action that is the bearer of the transformation of the process of social metabolism. When Smith writes his book, it is not because he is simply curious about what the wealth of nations is, but as an instrument for the political action of the English state with respect to world trade... Regarding the organization of the process of social metabolism. And when David Ricardo writes his *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* , which starts from naturalization itself, he does so to operate on the organization of the... [51] [...] I compare because I very sharply separate psychoanalytic theory trying to explain what a human subject is, and the psychoanalytic clinic (for which I have respect and recognition), which operates in a concrete way on the subjectivity of the individuals on whom it operates.

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[50] There is a cut in the recording.
[51] There is another cut in the recording.

Each one produces his own consciousness, therefore he does not produce the consciousness of the subject of psychoanalysis, despite the fact that there is a naturalization of calling "therapist" as if it were a clinical character and the analysed, it is recognized that the subject is the subject that is analyzed. But it is a form of social labor that has a potentiality to operate in that process in which a subject is producing his or her own consciousness. There are other ways of operating in the process in which an individual produces his consciousness in other forms of societies that are based on the alienated character of consciousness, but it is not a free consciousness. So I claim analysis because it satisfies a concrete need of the subjects that we are free because we are alienated, we can only confront our alienated subjectivity by reproducing that alienation. In this case, not because it seems to us that we are not alienated, but because one recognizes oneself in one's determinations in a way that without it one could not know, and one would be a prisoner of determinations that one does not have the capacity to control and thus develops that capacity.

I claim it in contrast to the miserability of behavioral psychology, which reduces every problem to positive and negative answers. I tried to criticize this psychology but there was no conception of subjectivity in it. In the most developed case, it is said: it is the environment that determines the individual. But what is the environment? The product of the action of individuals. But what is the individual? What is determined by the environment. So the criticism that these lines make of psychoanalysis is that it pretends to explain subjectivity but in reality there is none. This has led to the denial of the antagonistic character with which one carries one's social relationship in one's subjectivity, and has given way to pilling the individual because one does not even have to ask what is happening to him: if he has this symptom there is this pill, and the question is over. Which is an expression of the most brutal reproduction of alienation in the capitalist mode of production: don't think, don't ask yourself about your subjectivity.

But if I have to look at it [psychoanalysis] as an explanation of what human subjectivity is: this is representations of human subjectivity proper to the capitalist mode of production as if they were inherent to the human being. That is what I criticize. Freud already had *Capital* at his disposal, so that... Although it was not so widely read, but the step had already been taken, unlike Smith and Ricardo, who no one had taken the step. But after Marx one has... this question. So, the questioning has this character: if this were natural human subjectivity there is no way to overcome the capitalist mode of production.

Magalí[52]: It's hard for me to link what you were explaining with psychoanalysis. It is also difficult for me to detach myself from the theoretical baggage that I bring out there.

JIC: We start from the simplest determination of the process of social metabolism, and we move on to its form as a process of work, etc., and the form of human knowledge until we reach consciousness and will. So, this form of knowledge, this way of spending the body to recognize what potentialities one has

[52] This workshop attendee was a psychoanalyst.

as a subject with respect to those offered by the environment, I look at it in different modes of production and it has different forms. When I arrive at the capitalist mode of production, what I find is what is the form of the general social relation, and that is the exchange of commodities. I see what the commodity is, what value is, and how value is objectified, and then what comes is: if this is the general social relation, what is the simplest and most general determination of consciousness in the capitalist mode of production?[53] It is this determination that it is a free consciousness that encloses alienation in the commodity. Then one begins to look at how this is presented in practical consciousness to those who wonder about consciousness. And in the case of Freud and Lacan it is this: when it has to be explained, the consciousness of the capitalist mode of production is put in place as if it transcended it. In Lacan's case, he even takes his own forms and ends up posing fetishism as a biological question, not as a historical form.

That is criticism. And it is not an epistemological problem: it is that according to this insurmountable condition the socialist mode of production would be unattainable; it is a problem, then, of political action, of its organization. If I start by looking at consciousness as Freud or Lacan put it, that political action makes no sense. That is why I am very careful to separate the operation of psychoanalytic theory on individual subjects from what it would imply to act politically on the basis of that same conception of what human subjectivity is.

Gabriel: As Javiera says, how can something that has naturalization at its base have the power to advance on alienation? What the psychoanalyst tells you is to leave what society tells you and act as someone free (I think, very abstractly).

JIC: It will reproduce the alienation, but if it is "successful" it will reproduce to the individual his alienation placed with respect to an image that allows him to go beyond where he could go on his own. And insofar as the mechanics are to ask oneself rationally, what is present is the possibility of facing one's own alienation. "Success" does not come from this questioning, but it has the potential to produce an individual who asks himself critically about himself. It's true that it's going to give you the appearance that you're simply a freer individual, although I don't know if that happens in every line [of psychoanalysis].

For me, the question of subjectivity itself in the terms of psychoanalysis, in contrast to the terms of the critique of political economy, has a moment of development that I cannot say: so much comes from here and so much comes from here. At the time they constituted for me a unity in the sense of... I could not have answered myself about free subjectivity as a form of alienated subjectivity, I think that regardless of whether I had asked myself about my own subjectivity, whether it was free or alienated. [...] I don't know if this has a general character, I don't think it would have helped me if, as Gabriel says, the image that I am free is fed abstractly, etc., it wouldn't have helped me.

There is a general psychoanalytic approach that is a disciple of Freud, which has more or less happened... At one time he had a certain presence, he is one of the

[53] All that is going to appear as concrete form are manifestations of this simpler determination.

Freudians who had to go into exile in the United States due to Nazi persecution, Edmund Bergler. He does not propose as a starting point an abstract freedom, but rather that this abstract freedom what it contains is an impotence to confront... I don't know if I would say alienation... But that appears as a false freedom that seems to face that which appears as external and in reality is not facing that exterior but its own subjectivity [...].

Lacan makes some uses of Marx's words that are... When it begins with the "plus-" of surplus value, it was the anticipation of pleasure. And that Marx "founded capitalism", already there... And on the other hand there is his proposal of mathematical representation as the rigorous form of science, it does almost the same as neoclassical economics, it appears as if this representation could account for general qualitative determinations, something that is absolutely outside of mathematics. Why do you need to appeal to that as if it were a breakthrough? What historical role does this approach play?

[II]

[…] In a discussion where there were several people with training in psychoanalysis, in fact, I began the development like this: I have this explanation of what the subject is like, and I have to ask myself then about the simplest determination. To subject him to criticism is not to say: "It is nonsense to resort to a myth", but to ask myself about the need for this author to resort to myth, what determinations his conscience carries for a myth to suffice for him to explain. So the question arises as to what is the process of human life in its simplest determination, is it a process of social metabolism, etc. Then the commodity appeared to us, and alienation expressed in freedom, etc. I can't take it externally and say: this helps me or not, or I'm going to accept it or reject it. The question is what he tells me, to confront this author and ask myself if I find the same thing that he finds. If I find the same thing, then my process will be a simple recognition from the social point of view, and if from a point I do not find the same thing, from that moment on it will be a process of original knowledge not only from the individual point of view but also from the social point of view.

When we started (I don't even remember if I emphasized, although I should), we started with the class struggle – a form of political action – and we moved on to the commodity, which seems to be a different field within social science, which is economics. But when we ask ourselves what the commodity was, we move on to the process of human metabolism, which seems to be typical of biology. When we ask ourselves about the need for this thing in front of us, we move on to this other thing that determines our conscience and will. But what are conscience and will? It is not explained by the production of commodities, it is a development of the natural form of the human metabolism process. I referred to Marx and the single science. There was no leap from natural to social things. What we did was to say: this natural form that is generically proper to the human being is what we are going to call a "social form" [...].

Where do I propose the process of recognition and original knowledge? When we were advancing in the reading of Marx, at a certain point I said that I do not recognize what appeared here. As to what a thing, an objectified external existence, is in *Capital* he says nothing. But in drafts... I made the mistake of saying: there are use values whose production is prior to their consumption and others that are simultaneous ("services"). In his drafts, Marx has a series of proposals about services, and he says that there is no objectification of the product (my proposal is: I am listening to the singer and there is an objectification, I am appropriating not the subjectivity of the singer but the objectification of what he is doing), he is going to say (it is very complex because there are different forms of service, etc.), at certain times, which *seem to* have value; at others, which *have* value. So, I subjected this to criticism and said: I can't find this thing that's there. I cannot say even 1) Marx says this (and not propose that); nor 2) that Marx really meant what I say, because in reality it has to be interpreted in this way, because he once said something that is what he said there but less clearly, etc. What I have to say is that I find something different from Marx.

And the other aspect is the question of free consciousness as a form of alienated consciousness, which is not expressed in this way in *Capital*, although there is no clash, but there is the need to go a step further, because in the development of this process of recognition I say: here we must emphasize this determination, It is not enough to say that it is a fetishistic consciousness. Because if I overcome fetishism, what do I have left, an abstractly free consciousness? No: a consciousness that has advanced in its freedom because it recognizes itself as alienated, but it is alienated.

When one makes criticism, one does not interpret. It is fundamental why I do not find what the author is finding, unfold it, say: he says this, how do I realize what he is saying? (not "What do you mean?"). When Freud develops the 3 psychic instances, I do not interpret, but... What do I find in what he is unfolding? And I find the consciousness of the commodity producer. And when it comes to the myth I say: this is the naturalization of the consciousness of the commodity producer. What does this author tell me confront me with? And then I unfold what confronts me.

[...] When one speaks of form and content one is expressing the general form of determination. But when one has to face a *concrete* determination, what is at stake in this method that we are using is: I have a certain existence that I faced and I wonder about its necessity. And if this has a need, it is because in this present existence there is a potentiality that is realized. Then I have to ask myself where the need came from, and each time I ask myself in the analysis about the need for this need, for that one, until I arrive at the simplest form of that need. And then what I do is come back, not saying: I have a content that has to have a form, and now this form has to be a content that has this form...

One can put it externally like this, but the development itself, if we look at the way Marx unfolds it, he begins by saying: what is it that I have in front of me? Exchange value is a relation of equality, this is the immediate aspect it has. And he asks: how can it be if it is a relationship between qualitatively different things? So it has to have a common quality that gives these things the potential to change.

When Marx finishes this development and everything about SNALdPaI, he comes back and says: I look at the commodity and it never makes it evident that it has this attribute when I look at it in isolation. Where is this attribute expressed? In the exchange relationship. So, if that's the expression or the shape of the attribute, I start unfolding it and I'm moving forward in that deployment. It is not that at one point it was said: since there is a content here, it has to have a form. Otherwise: I found this content but I don't see it anywhere.

There is a development between the first draft of the 1st edition of *Capital* in that it looks at it in a way that it seems that the content is a purely mental, conceptual matter. Then he says: but if one looks at it from the mental point of view, the substance of value appears as if it were something conceptual. And it is in the 2nd edition of chapter I that abstract labor appears for the first time, the differentiation of abstract/concrete labor did not appear. And what appears is that if I look at it... It is no longer an abstract problem that first it was a product of thought, then it was if it was looked at from the point of view of thought. Now it is: I look at the commodity and it has no way of expressing this attribute that I know it has. So what do I do? I saw that the attribute was expressed from the outset in the exchange relationship and I'm going to unfold it. In the unfolding of the exchange relation something appears that from the point of view of logical representation is inadmissible. At the end of section 3 of Chapter I we come to money which expresses value even though it is not in exchange relation to any commodity, which cannot express the magnitude of its own value but is immediately exchangeable, it is recognized from the outset as a product of social labour. How did I find out? Unfolding the way in which this attribute is expressed, which cannot be expressed by itself [but] under a form that is the opposite, which is the attribute, which is what appears in the question of the equivalent. And that is what leads the fetishistic consciousness to the evidence that it is the natural attribute of a thing.

And in none of these steps is there a leap that says, for example, like Smith, who since money cannot explain says that it is natural for things to change. When I get to that point in Smith, I say: I can't recognize that step he took: I have to reproduce it for myself. And then I say: no, what happens is that Smith started looking at that attribute as a natural attribute and it is not.

[...] If the phenomenon, if the forms were exactly the same as the content, one would look at the form and immediately know what it is, the senses would suffice. Marx is going to express it by saying: scientific knowledge would not be necessary [...][54]. The problem is not that the knowledge was immediate. One always starts with immediate knowledge, one faces the concrete on which one is going to act in its immediacy. Since the content is not equal to the form, one is confronted with a phenomenon and then one realizes that it is not identical with itself, that it has a cause that is not the phenomenon itself, and there begins the analysis, which can stop more or less immediately, it can have the form of objective knowledge or knowledge that has no form of objective knowledge. There is knowledge that contains the contradiction that, trying to be objective, it ceases to be the possible form of knowledge because it has to stop at the immediate appearance. Religious

[54] Cut in the recording.

knowledge has this character: it is a matter of faith, the answer immediately is that it is explained by divinity, and when it is a question of explaining objectively it collides with the root of that knowledge.

[Critical/Marxist Political Economy][55]

[...] What we had set out to do was to confront what has happened with this development that Marx makes, how it is recognized by subjects who recognize or name themselves as "critical/Marxist political economists" (although there are authors that I am going to mention who would not approve of being put in this "package"), who propose the development of Marxist political economy. Marx does not say: I am making a critique of "classical/vulgar political economy", but of "political economy" in general. In some places it appears that political economy is the science of the bourgeoisie, in others more attenuated, but in general there is a critique, the substance of which is the naturalization of the commodity social relation, from which arises the naturalization of a free consciousness. What is criticized in Marx and that one extends to other proposals that did not exist in general in Marx's time is: in Marxist political economy it is naturalized. It appeared in classical political economy, that they could not explain the form of value because that would confront them with the historical character of the capitalist mode of production and with what is specific to consciousness in the capitalist mode of production. One has neoclassical economics that claims the natural character of value. One of the founders of this, Walras, says: value, once established, is natural by *a*, *b, c*... And he claims that free consciousness is natural. And that all this should be eternal, and any deviation from it is unnatural, that previous social forms were unnatural and any other attempt at a society other than this is also unnatural.

What happens in Marxist political economy? There is a line that holds that value is a philosophical category. And this only produces confusion and lack of scientific rigor with respect to the study of economic relations, and Marx's proposals must be converted into science by freeing him from these proposals about value, its substance and its form. The fullest expression of this is what is called "analytical Marxism," which also says that we must take the tools of neoclassical economics, rational choice models, and econometric techniques. When rational choice is proposed, neoclassical economics says: this is natural rationality, the one that chooses freely. Analytic Marxism says: yes, it is a natural freedom, but they are mistaken that it is expressed in selfishness: this natural condition is expressed in solidarity. So it is rational, there is no content other than what the individual recognizes that he is doing, and therefore the problem is: let's look at another naturally free consciousness, reject that "rationality" of neoclassical economics and put a "better" free rationality.

I'm not going to dwell much longer because this has a lot of stupidity (or worse things than stupidity). Like saying that, as Marx already said that in capitalism higher social forms are advanced, an individual who does not have many economic concerns, who works in what he likes, is already living in that superior society.

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[55] The criticisms are developed in *Knowing Capital Today*.

So, there is this approach that says that it makes no sense to talk about value, but that it does make sense to talk about values, and there is going to appear (with Xatan's apologies) the morality, the ethics, the moral condemnation of capitalism, that what remains when one frees Marx from the question of value is Marx's condemnation of capitalist society. There is an author who makes this point in the journal *Capital and Class* .

Ignacio: I wanted to ask if neo-Marxism is not full of those representatives who maintain that "value" is a philosophical category, such as John Elster, Gabriel Cohen, etc.

JIC: The main one, Elster, is from analytical Marxism. I don't know if they are "neo-Marxists". The main theorist who makes these proposals within the economic part is called John Roemer. Then, within analytical Marxism, not economists but which makes a somewhat different approach, there is Gerald Cohen, who writes *Karl Marx's Theory of History. A defense*.

Ignacio: I used to say "neo-Marxists" because today, as a sociology student, that's how I have studied them. It is as if it were a surpassing of what Marx said.

JIC: They openly claim to have transformed Marx's proposals into a scientific proposal. There is a current in which there are proposals by different authors that intersect with each other regarding the fact that value is quantities of labor and therefore exists in all forms of society and is expressed in quantities of labor. The question of historical character disappears or is left aside. Rather, it is a historical form that springs up externally. Now instead of commodities being exchanged for quantities of labour, it is now in quantities of money. Many discussions that I am going to mention are linked to things that we will see later.

One of these is the question of the concrete determination, the concrete form of the value of commodities, determined in production and circulation as products of capital, not as mere products of labour, and consequently how value takes the form of the price of production. This is what Marx develops in Volume 3, converging in Volume 1 and 2. Marx puts this in a prologue where he says: here we are not going to talk about generalities, but about the concrete form that this has, and consequently about the unity of all these determinations that were unfolded, about how they are all realized in their unity. Then this statement of value as a quantity of labor that is expressed in quantities of labor appears. This comes from neo-Ricardian economics. Its leader was the author Joan Robinson[56] who begins her text that is called something like "Compendium of Marxist Political Economy" by saying: well, if for a German philosopher of the nineteenth century, "value" could have some meaning, for a modern English reader, "value" is quantities of work. And with that he settled this issue. So there are Marxist authors who take up this approach by quoting it or this appears deriving from developments.

[56] "Joan Robinson (1903-1983) was an English economist who was part of the so-called post-Keynesian school of Cambridge, England. He constitutes a paradigm of a heterodox economist, since his theorizations brought together elements of the most diverse schools, generally opposing the different dominant orthodoxies in economics as the twentieth century progressed" [Wikipedia].

Tomás: Analytic Marxism is going to be directly related to utilitarianism (among other things), and it is different for me from neo-Marxism, which is more irrational or unscientific. Analytic Marxism is not interesting, it was not of much use to us, but neo-Marxism is already that they say: Marx is Europeanizing... It is the question of center-periphery, etc.

JIC: These types of proposals seem to me already... On the one hand it is nothingness itself, but on the other it has a whole determination of a political nature. It arises from certain conditions that make up the materiality of work in the capitalist mode of production, it is no coincidence that they have appeared in the present despite the fact that there are aspects of it that come from much further back, only that they constitute more or less powerful expressions in the present. All these proposals are based on a conscience that is free by nature and the oppression that is exercised over it.

Javiera: Shortly before reaching chapter II in my translation you speak of "[...] that tedious and absurd controversy about the role that nature would play in the creation of value." What do you mean? Smith? Ricardo?

JIC: I couldn't answer you too accurately because these are discussions that disappeared in neoclassical economics: naturalization is such that it doesn't even consider it, it doesn't discuss the natural character of the categories with which it works. Capital for them is a natural thing that produces useful and scarce things by itself and therefore has value. When we get to the last section of Volume 3, we will see that there is a chapter called "The Trinitarian Formula" or something like that; it refers to the trinity between labor-wages, capital-profit, and land-rent. And Marx is going to say: that has as much to do with each other as notarial deeds and music. And neoclassical economics is the full development of this: natural things produce social relations of their own accord—the earth, for example. But value, since it is not the product of labor but a natural condition of utility and scarcity, there is no discussion. It is nature that is the source of value. Work in neoclassical economics is a negation of action: a sacrifice of leisure.

Javiera: I wasn't referring to the neoclassicals. Today you have a whole variant of Marxism saying that animals and nature work. But what I see is that this discussion is not new, that's why I referred to that section.

JIC: I don't know the history of economic thought to answer you who was or wasn't in that type of proposal. That today they do appear, we can incorporate them into those that we are seeing because in reality they are associated, when they make an attempt at foundation, that attempt is associated with the other line of Marxist political economy with respect to value. That if one is "value has no more form than content," the other is "value has no more content than form." That form is reduced to content, that is, that value is expressed in quantities of labor, etc.

In which authors do these terms appear most crudely? There are two current authors, Cockshott and Cotrell, who make this point: commodities are exchanged in proportions to quantities of work and money must be replaced by what Marx calls "hourly bonuses". And Marx begins his draft of what will be the *Contribution*,

but which will later be the first draft of *Capital*, discussing why value, being its substance quantities of labor, can *never* be expressed in quantities of labor. What is the significance of this proposal? Cockshott and Cotrell are considered to be the two theoretical economists of "socialism of the 21st century". So, it is not simply a problem of abstractly theoretical construction, but of the foundation of how to advance in the organization of social life. They argue that with the development of computers it would be possible to account for everything in working time and then govern exchange in a centralized way and that there would no longer be the movement of capital.

These assignments in quantities of work also appear in some proposals of the so-called "market socialism", which is a contradiction in terms because "socialism" is a directly social organization of production and consumption and the market is the indirect organization of production and consumption. In the *Grundrisse* Marx says that this was the approach of the Proudhonians that later went on to take on aspects in the sense of: it is no longer an individual production, but a collective one... But these are collective organs that produce commodities and exchange with each other in proportion to the quantities of labor that each has expended. I had some discussions with Cockshott a long time ago by email (when it was a great novelty, 20 years ago), and Cockshott's response was: "value = quantities of work", it is expressed in quantities of work, period.

Other proposals will appear such as Paul Sweezy's, which I always summarize as follows: when I was young there were 2 options to know Marx's developments (without reading Marx) depending on whether or not one was affiliated with the Communist Party. If he was, he read the *Handbook of Political Economy* of the USSR; if not, he read Sweezy. And he began by saying that since labour is private, it can only be expressed in quantities of money, and then he began to give all the examples of relations of exchange in quantities of labour, and to discuss the question of the prices of production by speaking on the one hand of something which is expressed in quantities of labour and on the other in quantities of money. This same reduction appears, that value has no form other than its substance.

There is going to be a whole line within Marxism where to explain value you have to start from the unity between production and consumption, for example: Folley. They are inspired by a Ricardian author[57] who makes a series of models for the discussion of what happens to prices and so on, but who says that he is going to build a scheme that ends up taking it to quantities of work. And when he starts his book it is called *Commodity Production by Means of Commodity*. Sraffa's commodities... One can give him the benefit of the doubt when he reads the cover. When he reads the first paragraph of the text he will say: these are not commodities, because here there is an immediate unity between production and social consumption: everything that is produced is consumed; and that means that labor is not private and therefore Sraffa's commodities are not commodities.

There are authors who have had a lot of weight within Marxism – now they have been more displaced – and who applaud the development of Srafa. One of them,

[57] Piero Sraffa.

Dobb, says that Marx had not really set out to make an original development, that he only wanted something like... to make Ricardo's proposals more prolific; and also that it is no longer that Marx started with the commodity, but that his problem was to construct a concept of value. It no longer starts from a concrete form, which is how social wealth is presented to it in the capitalist mode of production, but its task was to construct concepts, starting from basic concepts such as value, exchange value and use value... In Dobb's book in the Spanish translation he refers to Marx's development being "so badly constructed...", and in the original English he does not say this, but "interpreted". But for him it is a problem of interpretation.

Marx, in one of his last texts, the *Marginal Notes to Wagner's Treatise on Political Economy* (one of the primitive neoclassical economists, of the Austrian School, who makes a comment on Marx's proposals and strikingly says that it is much more interesting than other proposals of the time), when he reads it and notes his comments, in the first place, Wagner says that it is a "theory of cost" inspired by Ricardo. And Marx is indignant and tells him that if Wagner had taken the trouble to read it, he would have realized that Ricardo is concerned with the magnitude of value and not with finding the link between his theory of value and nature [...][58]. And what Marx is going to note first of all is: I do not start from concepts, therefore not from the concept of value either, so I do not have to divide this concept in any way. Where I start from is the simplest social form in which the product of labor in today's society takes shape, which is the commodity. And what we are going to find is a lot of these proposals about what concept Marx wants to produce or what concept Marx starts from.

Here, in Dobb, we find it on the side of those who propose that value is quantities of labor and is expressed in quantities of labor, but we are going to see it very strongly on the other side. In another era it had more presence, and today it slips into different approaches, it appears in many conditions of the determination of prices of production as a concrete form of value, where values are measured in quantities of labor and prices of production in quantities of money, it is transformed from labor to money...

What appears above all in the other aspect is that, if in the first abstract labor is seen as the form of value, in this other aspect it will be taken as if it were a social form specifically proper to the capitalist mode of production, something that is proper to the materiality of human labor such as abstract labor. We are going to see a line in which abstract labor will appear as a social, historical form, and what is more: it is the specific form that labor (abstract being) has in the capitalist mode of production.

I begin with the proposal of the *Manual of Political Economy* of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. He begins by saying at one point: "The labour of commodity producers conceived as an investment of their human labour power in general, regardless of the concrete form it takes, is abstract labour." This is saying that abstract labor is a material expenditure of the body, therefore common to all forms of society. In the same paragraph he says: "The abstract labour which forms the

[58] The connection is cut.

value of the commodity is a historical category, a specific form of social labour inherent only in the commodity economy." And now it is a historic category. It is not private labor that is the specific form. And it is the mercantile economy. And then he says: there are commercial companies where work is carried out privately, and commercial companies where work is carried out in a directly social way. What is the Soviet Union? It is socialism, it is the society where labor produces commodities, a commodity economy where labor is carried out in a directly social way. Then these 2 types of commercial companies appear. How can he justify the existence of the commodity in directly social labour (hence the value and form of the value of the commodity = money)?

The explanation he is going to give is: there is an allocation of social labour to the different organs of production (branches/enterprises) that is planned, but it is not known whether or not the allocation that has been made in this form corresponds to the needs of the members of society. So he says that labor is directly social but there is no immediate unity with social consumption. But that is a characteristic of private labor. So what he is going to say is: the products of labor have to go to the market, to the process of change, because there it becomes clear whether what was planned is adequate or not. In spite of this, the manual goes on to say that work is not private, that fetishism has been overcome in the socialist economy, and that social relations between men do not take the "deceptive form" of relations between things. And that the production-consumption unit is established through the exchange of commodities. And therefore the producers of commodities are confronted with the product of their own labour as the bearer of a social power which is alien to them and dominates them. It is thus affirmed that there is an abstract labor that produces value, but that in reality there is a directly social organization of labor.

The manual (which was already a proposal that came from before in the USSR) responds to a question that Stalin in his last years of life (1951 approx.), who sent a comment to the authors of the manual... [The law of value in socialism as an instrument of planning] which also teaches "the comrades who work in the domain of the economy to rationally direct production and discipline it." And you have to think that among the authors of the manual who all worked in the domains of economics and had to direct production, one was Leontiev who is recognized as the original author of the input-output matrices, they were not just anyone. The manual has two parts: 1) the capitalist economy; 2) the socialist economy.

In the socialist one there is value, but it is not value: it is an instrument for planning... And the same with prices, wages, etc. This trained not only all economics students in the universities of the USSR, but also all communist militants. And this goes into decline very quickly and is going to be replaced by neoclassical economics. There is an author who was Kantorovich who writes: work is a factor of production that must be remunerated according to its productivity. Land[59] is a factor of production and must be remunerated according to its

[59] **JIC:** An inanimate thing that does not produce anything by itself. The only one who has the capacity to produce is the living subject: the vegetable that is born on the earth produces itself by appropriating the substance of the earth in its process of metabolism, and the individual that sows

productivity. That is the problem at a time when the USSR has problems of insufficient food production, and he says that one problem is that production has not been organized on this basis. And then it is going to do the same thing that the NE does: it is not going to say "capital", it is going to say "the instruments of production"[60] "are a factor of production". And after that he adds: "(...) and this is what Marx said." And the Academy of Sciences of the USSR becomes neoclassical.

[...] He[61] proposed that he taught neoclassical economics to economics students so that it would not happen to them like Soviet economists, who had learned it from old age and had been fascinated. Perhaps he was quite right because many former Marxist economists are now consecrated neoclassical economists.

Javiera: Why did neoclassical economics have so much development in the USSR?

JIC: Because it is the normal, general form of scientific consciousness regarding economic relations in the capitalist mode of production. That is why it is universal, it is the expression of the fetishism of the commodity in a society where social labor is private (there is no immediate unity between production and consumption, there is value, commodities and capital). Immediately after the Revolution of 1917 there is a very strong debate. The general picture is that socialist society abolished private ownership of the means of production, surpassed the capitalist mode of production, and this is the socialist mode of production. They begin to discuss how to plan: here we plan in terms of use values. The other position is: no, value is a planning instrument and we need it. In concrete movement the first group disappears and "planning" is carried out on the basis of value production. One immediately looks at it and says: this is capitalist production, what governs social production is the multiplication of this way of organizing social production, of the capacity to set social labor in motion. And then there is the problem that it is necessary to justify ideologically that this is not the capitalist mode of production in the face of what all the concrete movements say. So, different approaches appear.

One of them comes together in the construction of the Manual. Another proposal disappears along with the life of its author because it could not fit, because if what he said was valid, it was obvious that the USSR was not the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. So it must be presented as overcoming fetishism and alienation, there is a free consciousness, but there are commodities. A string of incongruities more grotesque than those of neoclassical economics is produced, which has no more problems with saying enormous inconsistencies and moving on, and the question is how within that sphere they are accepted uncritically. So... It was the way to justify and consider and operate... Neoclassical economics is not simply an abstract ideological construction: it is a form of consciousness, of organizing action, and they do organize it. It is a form that (we must think it is from

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produces the vegetable that produced itself by taking the substance of the earth. The earth is not a subject.

[60] **JIC:** That they are inanimate things without any capacity to produce anything by themselves: they are the means that the human subject uses to produce.

[61] He speaks of a certain Guido, a minister under Menem, who taught at the Faculty of Economic Sciences.

the period in which the USSR begins to clash with itself) allows us to say: here... nothing, it is a problem of economic calculation and there are factors of production...

I jumped to an author with a lot of weight, a Polish Marxist: Oskar Lange (today less present), who has a text on Marxist economics and revolves around economic calculation, economic rationality and economic calculation and what is going to be called "social engineering" from that point on, which is "planning". And it's also going to talk about the value which is the allocation of quantities of labor and is expressed in quantities of labor. This is the normal scientific consciousness of economic relations in the capitalist mode of production. Which leaves us with the question of why we are a bunch of abnormals. But well, we are going to try to answer it throughout the development of this workshop.

Ignacio: I only have the doubt that... Doesn't the production-consumption unity mean that it is a higher phase of capitalism, that what failed in the USSR was to lock itself into that national "real socialism" instead of internationalizing it?

JIC: I wouldn't call it "failed" because one would have to wonder why it is what it is. Second, I would ask myself if its powers expressed anything more than a process of capital accumulation. I propose that when we have looked at the development of accumulation and where it is tending, we ask ourselves what the USSR was about. That said, for me it is the first time in history in a national space that it takes into its hands the management of capital at that national level and shows what historical powers the working class has in carrying out this absolute centralization of capital, and what forms it has. Because that is the fullest form of the development of the capitalist mode of production as a national process of capital accumulation.

[II][62]

[...] This other approach is based on the work of an economist from the USSR, Isaak Rubin, a collaborator of Ryazanov, who ended up purged (I don't know if for what he said) in the Stalin period. His main "work" is the *Essays on the Marxist Theory of Value*, which is a compendium of articles and discussions with other Soviet economists. At the beginning of the 70s, outside the USSR (in "Western Marxism"), Rubin was recovered, published in English, Spanish... And from then on, his proposals became the dominant approach within Marxist political economy with a series of aspects. Rubin has a series of proposals on methodology that we will leave aside, and then he has his proposal on value.

Rubin contrasts sharply with Marx's view that he does not start from concepts. Rubin says that you have to build a concept of *value*. Mixing quotes from Marx with his proposal, he says this. Where does this concept come from? From the concept of *abstract labor*. He says that since the concept of value is a social concept, the

[62] It continues with Marxist political economy, as we have already seen authors with preponderance between the decades of the 40s and 70s.

concept of abstract labor must be so as well. So there is a circular reasoning: to know what the concept of value is, one must know what the concept of abstract labor is, and to know the concept of abstract labor, one already knows that it has to be a social concept. So he says that it cannot be a physiological concept. The problem for Rubin is that Marx speaks four times in the first chapter of the physiological expenditure of labor power as abstract labor.

Then he is going to say that they misinterpreted, literally, because they were carried away by a few sentences in which Marx poses it as a physiological expense. Then he makes Marx look like an incoherent person who wrote contradictory sentences, and says that Marx's true explanation is in the *Contribution*. A couple of clarifications: in the *Contribution* he does not use the term abstract labor, he does not do so until the 2nd edition of *Capital*. Before, it appeared as work "in general" or "*per se*". But in the *Contribution* it also says that it is an expenditure of muscle, brain, etc. So even where Rubin says that the true explanation must be sought, Marx speaks of the physiological expenditure of the human body.

Rubin is going to *separate* concrete labor from abstract labor, and private labor from social labor. We saw that labor is a productive expenditure of the human body applied in a concrete useful way. We look at work in its unity, and it is not that on the one hand there is abstract labor and on the other concrete labor, but that they are two moments that are going to play a more or less important role depending on the societies, but in all of them there is a mass of available labor force that must be given a concrete useful form. And we also saw that private labor is social labor carried out privately and independently, there is no separation. Rubin separates them and states that when commodities are exchanged, the *product* and labor of the commodity producer are subjected to substantial changes.

[Tomás asks him why he is so angry, that he finds it interesting.] [...] My indignation is not an epistemological or "conceptual" one, as Rubin would say. It is a political indignation. Because what underlies this approach and why does it become the absolutely dominant form today in the realm not only of Marxist political economy but in a series of discussions that appear within Marxism with what is called "critical political economy" more generally. To the point where, when I am in that field of discussion, that is: "Abstract labor is a material expenditure of labor power, therefore it is common to all forms of society, but when it is applied under a concrete useful form in a private and independent way, that *labor materialized* in its product is transformed into its attribute of changeability, It is socially represented as the capacity of commodities to relate to each other in exchange. Hence the 'spectral' character of value".... If one does not make this clarification before one begins, everyone present thinks that when one says "abstract labor" he means that it is the special form that labor has in the capitalist mode of production.

Political consequence of this? I can tell you why it becomes a general approach[63] summarizing with things that we have not yet seen (it is complex: it implies changes in the accumulation of capital, we have to talk about the political

[63] He talks about an interview he was given in Peru and published in the CICP on this issue. In session no. 60 he also mentions it.

organization of the working class and where its strength comes from...). I think it was first published in Spanish in 1973 or thereabouts. At that time all those who presented it criticized the "old mechanistic Marxism". 50 years have passed, and today the texts that appear by the authors of these works begin by criticizing "orthodox Marxism", etc. Why this need to reject, to invalidate what was said by a whole series of subjects who participated in the organization of the political action of the working class (one can disagree with what they did)? This ends up in proposals (there is everything) that say that there should be no political organization, that there should not be taking power, that recognizing oneself as a working class is "being", objectifying oneself, what one has to do is "doing", and when they are asked how, they say: "We don't know". Why does this become a dominant political expression?

[Gonzalo asks about the specificity of the role of abstract labor, how it appears in capitalism].

The only link that commodity producers have in common is that they have a share of the capacity to perform human labor in general and have to decide on their own, privately and independently, what concrete form they are going to give it. The problem is that we have to see if what each one did was applied in a useful way for the others, if they did it under normal conditions or not. How do you solve this if you and others don't have personal ties? They cannot tell you that you spent too much time compared to normal conditions, or whether this is useful or not. This reciprocal recognition is indirect, it is not a personal attribute, but of the products of the SNALdPaI. If that work is useful to others, this recognition that the work that was done in this particular form was one of those quotas of general labor power that had to be allocated, and it was well allocated, is going to be represented as the social attribute that this product has to be exchanged for one that has the same attribute as it. in an automatic movement.

Classical political economy (plus Smith, because Ricardo is not interested, and neoclassical economics takes it), will explain how it is the mechanism through which unity is re-established each time it deviates. Marx is going to raise it a little in chapter III of Volume 1, and fully in Volume 3. The form of this is competition. But trying to raise the competition between simple private and independent producers can only be done in a very general way. If a commodity is left over, not all social labor is going to be recognized as socially useful and then the producers of commodities are going to receive a smaller equivalent than the one they applied (I leave it that way so as not to complicate it further), and there will be a modification in production and it will be adjusted automatically. That in a society of simple producers of commodities is very diffuse, because the individual who made shoes and there were too many shoes, cannot start making gnocchi because he does not have the tools to do so. Smith puts it at the outset as: the production of what is missing goes up and the production of what is left over goes down. And Marx leaves it on a much more general terrain until Volume 3 in which the forms of competition will appear in detail.

What is one of the keys to changing industries? Credit. It's not that the shoe manufacturer, as there are leftovers, goes and sets up a pasta factory. The thing is

that the credit that the shoe factory is using, when it has difficulty paying, the bank withdraws it, and the one who makes the gnocchi is going to do very well, it goes to the bank and then the capital is going to move from one place to another (put in very rude terms). But among simple producers of commodities it is much more limited. There is a discussion about whether there was simple commodity production before capitalism, or whether the capitalist mode of production comes from the generalization of simple commodity production. But when one looks at the forms of the simple commodity producers that Marx is going to cite at the end of Volume 1, such as the free artisan or peasant of feudal society, in reality, the unity of social production is directly governed. Not everyone can be an artisan or a peasant, it is a real mercy to be an artisan of this or that, the guild regulates what, how, how much and who can produce.

[…] There is one author in particular who directly disappeared from his proposals private labor and is replaced by what that author says is abstract labor. Why the need to make specific to the capitalist mode of production what is not specific, erasing what is? What is at stake in this erasure? Marx argued that classical political economy could understand the substance of value but never why it has the form of exchange value. Now, if I empty the exchange-value of the substance, I cannot understand why exchange-value should appear to me as the cause of the determination of the value of commodities. What does this inversion imply politically?

What is Rubin going to propose that happens in the change? Rubin states that the product of labor and the labor of the commodity producer "are subject to substantial changes." Concrete labour becomes in exchange abstract labour and consequently private labour becomes social labour. How, then, does concrete "purely material" labor become abstract "purely social" labor? If abstract labor had to be social because value was social, now it turns out that abstract labor in exchange is the transformation of concrete labor. How does Rubin explain this transformation? Because commodities, in exchange, come into contact with gold, which functions as money. And gold-producing labor functions as social labor. Gold is immediately exchangeable for any commodity, and when it is exchanged for gold (because it is recognized as the representative of social labour), the concrete labour expended in producing the commodity becomes abstract labour, and private labour becomes social labour.

So that the commodities can be equalized... And abstract labor says that it is "[...] labor that has been equalized through the general equalization of all the products of labor. But the equalization of all the products of labor is not possible except through the assimilation of each of them with a general equivalent." This implies that in order to explain what value is, what abstract labor is, one must first know what the general equivalent is. How does one know, if one does not yet know what value is, what abstract labor is, the expression of value (VC) if one has not first seen the simple form of the expression of value ($10G = 1S$)? How do you explain the existence of the general equivalent? It is not that a socially recognized equivalent as a general representative of value is born out of nowhere, there is a long historical process for the general equivalent to be born. So there is another reasoning of a circular nature.

Once, while at a conference, an economist made a proposal that went further, but was born from Rubin's. And I shared a person in the audience with this question: you don't know yet what value, abstract labor, and exchange value are, how do you know what the general equivalent is? And that economist, a person who I think takes what he does seriously, answered: "Well, everyone starts where they want" (in the development of knowledge). So it is clear that the knowledge that is going to be built, that starts from something that is not explained, is going to be far from being objective knowledge.

Rubin is making a conceptual construction, and in them you can do what you want. There are 3 problems there: 1) the content of that construction, 2) if one wants to make the construction that one wants, I said that it is your construction, not that it is what Marx meant, and here what plays is the fallacy of the appeal to authority. That's why I spend my time clarifying what is on my own and what is not. And 3) the political question: why does that individual need to appeal to authority? If I read an author verbatim he says one thing, I can't say that the problem is that he was misinterpreted and I am fine when I say the opposite of what he says literally. In any case, I have to say that the author was wrong, that this is not the case. So I stop speaking on behalf of this author and say that this is my proposal. Why the need to call his work *Essays on the Marxist Theory of Value* and not *Rubinist theory*?

There are authors who manipulate texts disgustingly. Many years ago I had a discussion with an Australian Marxist by e-mail who said: "Marx says that machinery produces value", and he presented a quote from the *Grundrisse* and when I read it I said: it cannot be that he says this. The quotation had a part, three points ["(...)"], and another part. I go to the text, and in the middle there was *more than half a page* that had disappeared. He had taken the beginning of one sentence that had nothing to do with what followed and the end of another to make Marx utterly utterly nonsense. In the 2nd edition of my book[64] I criticize a lot of other authors with a lot of validity today.

What is wrong with Rubin with what he publishes? It has a series of discussions. At the beginning of the USSR there is the discussion about whether capitalism has been overcome, planning has to be in use values, which does not last long, and the subsequent justification of value without supposed private labor. Rubin was put on trial and shot in the 30s. So there are several discussions that were not known except for Rubin's answers. Now there has been publication of his polemic against those who upheld the materiality of abstract labor. Rubin begins to make clarifications. Rubin was told that if concrete labor becomes abstract in exchange, they are telling him that value exists only in exchange, that it does not exist in production. They then suggested that for Marx value is in production, therefore there is also abstract labor in production.

Rubin answers: in the process of direct production, labor is not yet abstract labor *in the full sense of the word*, it has yet to become abstract labor. What does

[64] *Know capital today. Critically use capital.*

this mean? He says that the commodity producer is pressured because he lives in a world of commodity producers, and then into his consciousness and will this pressure from all the other members of society, competitors and buyers, etc., enters into his head, so it is already in his head not in the full sense, but within production the determination of value has this form. It is then an ideal value that will be converted into real value when the social form of the commodity becomes the social form of money. And he is going to attribute it to Marx, when he does not talk about it. And he is going to add that abstract labor and V... I read verbatim: "(...) they are created or 'occur', they become in the direct process of production, and they are only realized in the process of change."

Now, labor does not "happen," it is not "created" in the production process: labor is applied and materialized in its product. He is going to continue with the inversion that it is the "concept of abstract labor" that is the basis and the content and the substance of value, a concept as the substance of a social relation. How does Rubin get to this point? It comes because it starts by saying that first we have to explain what commodity fetishism is, which is what explains all the forms proper to political economy. I read it:

> The theory of fetishism is *per se* the basis of Marx's entire economic system, and in particular of his theory of value. The theory of commodity fetishism is transformed into a propaedeutic for political economy.

How does Rubin know what fetishistic consciousness is if he does not know what a commodity is because he did not explain what value, and abstract labor, are? Rubin's construction is born from the proposition that consciousness is what explains social relations. Then the political content appears: consciousness would not be explained by social being, by social relation, but the other way around: one cannot understand what social relation is if one does not first answer about consciousness. So, we find this inversion.

One of the things that Rubin raises in order to disqualify Marx's analysis of the commodity and commodity-producing labor (because that's where the materiality of abstract labor appears), when he explains the method that Marx follows, he says that in reality those first two sections of chapter I were to "facilitate reading." but where the explanation really begins is when one looks at the social relation, when one looks at exchange value. And then we already know what fetishism is. That's where one says: nothing is innocent here, there is an objective in making this construction. If Marx claimed that he discovered the double character of work, to say that in reality this was to make it easier to understand...

So it is a problem of consciousness. And that is the role it is going to play, because on what consciousness do these pressures operate? This proposal that this is abstract labor, which pressures the producer of commodities when he is working, states that what these pressures do is "give greater durability, stability and regularity to the economic system", and that explains the appearance of fetishistic consciousness. It is no longer the unity of social production and consumption, it is no longer a specific historical form of development of the productive forces of society. The question is: and what is the consciousness of an individual on whom all this dominion of the reified relationship does not fall? And

the answer one gives oneself (Rubin does not say it) is that it is a consciousness that is free by nature, the only thing that can remain under which the pressure of the commodity falls. This is the other axis of Rubin's political sense and why it becomes a general representation at a given historical moment.

According to Rubin, it is only because there is commodity fetishism that money can exist, so in the USSR fetishism would continue to exist, and then this is not the "kingdom of freedom". This approach is politically rejected by the double ideological content of Rubin and the USSR. I don't think that is why Rubin fell from grace, there must be concrete discussions about more immediate things about the USSR, although when you look at it not much time passed from this discussion to the other situation. There is a story made by his wife of the sufferings. But it was clear that with this approach he was not going to have a comfortable place within the USSR. Then there is the question of why he did have it outside the USSR. The little I know about the Russian Marxists, I do not see them as great vindicators of Rubin, but in other places it is valid.

Gabriel: Could there be worthless "market prices"? In the USSR there were commodities, they would have a price but... Or perhaps with the development of machinery that at some point human work may not be so important... Prices would still be, I suppose, and commodities, but value would no longer be, because there would be no human labor, perhaps, right?

JIC: The private character of labor refers to the fact that there is no unity between how each individual organ of the social production process and the process of consumption is assigned what concrete labor it is going to do and what use values it is going to have both for *productive consumption* and for *individual* consumption. And among individuals who have no direct personal ties, this unity can only be established a posteriori through value. And there is no value that does not take the form of price, for it is the expression of value in money. If there is a price, there is value in the capitalist mode of production. If we are looking at a directly social organization of labor, there is a direct allocation of labor and consumption of each one and therefore there is no need for value or prices. The other question is the problem of every process of social metabolism, which is how the work, the productive activity of human subjects, is assigned, that we are the only subjects of that process of human metabolism, that we use the environment (which includes non-human subjects and things that are not subjects) to carry out this process of which we are subjects. The problem of value and price is always a question of labor allocation. Since you have to use means of production to work, you have to assign them. When we talk about value, we are talking about a social representation of the productive expenditure in general of the socially useful human body, made privately and independently.

In chapter III we are going to find things that have a price and that have no value, and then this contradiction appears, because we said that price was the form of value in money. The classic example is virgin land, not "filtered" in its condition as a means of production by human labor. It has no value because there is no objectified work, but everyone knows that it has a price. And it is not until the penultimate section of Volume 3 that the explanation of why land free of

improvements has no value but a price appears. In chapter III of Volume 1 he is going to make an observation about morality, which has no value but does have a price (and there one can say: is morality bought, or the immoral action of the individual, which can therefore include forms of work)? But that's where it will appear, between chapters II and III: in a society where everything is bought and sold because that is the general social relationship, everything has a price. It is an impersonal social relationship that each one carries with him in his pocket. Marx is going to quote the figure of Julius Caesar, I think, who is brought to him by the coins from the public baths, that he cannot be touched by someone superior because he comes from the bath and is something filthy, and his response is to make the person who brought it smell it and say: "Do you see that it has no smell?" here there is nothing personal involved, no condition of person in that general social bond.

And another aspect that I wanted to take from Gabriel's work: when one says "socialism", which until now one uses in a very abstract sense, in principle it is a direct conscious organization of the process of social metabolism. Therefore there is no private labor, there is an immediate unity between production and social consumption. Consequently, there is no value and there are no prices. Everything that is produced is directly destined for consumption by a certain subject. The power of the capitalist mode of production is to be able to develop the productive forces of social labour without being tied to bonds of personal dependence, and the extent of the bonds of personal dependence. And this is what Marx puts in the *Grundrisse* very much at the beginning of the 3 great stages of the development of humanity, and the role played by an organization of social life that has overcome personal ties and therefore tends to universality, erases all personal differentiation. What role does the capitalist mode of production have in this development? It will say: a society that produces universal individuals, with universal capacities and needs, without personal attributes, or makes them irrelevant to the process of social metabolism. It is not a problem of equality: it is a problem of indifferentiation, where if for a certain bond any attribute of individual subjectivity is indistinct, those attributes of individual subjectivity, which we all continue to be different, become a power of a directly social nature. It is not that they disappear, but it ceases to be the axis of the social relationship. [...]

Where do Rubin's developments lead? A series of proposals will appear that value is born in exchange, for example a line of German authors called "New Reading of Marx" that propose this (although value is later extended to the rest of society). Someone else proposes the same thing: change is an abstraction, and presents abstractly free subjects who go to change without consciousness... And in all these proposals it emerges that what is sought is to convert the subject of the capitalist mode of production into a free subject by nature that is oppressed by something that is external.

Another case is the proposal that the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production is born from the resistance to being oppressed. But why does anyone resist being oppressed if there is no one to oppress first? Then the proposal appears that it is in human nature to resist. So first it has to be in human nature to oppress: the natural thing would be oppression, because it is the first thing. Then

there are proposals such as Freud's, that it is impossible to have a society without oppressors and oppressed. I made this observation to someone with this position at a congress and the answer he gave me was: "yes, maybe it is a remnant of my religious formation."

There is an author who takes Marx's phrase that abstract labor is that which is carried out with indifference to the concrete form and says: abstract labor is that which is done by the worker, which is repetitive, empty of content, which abstracts from the worker's life experiences, his suffering, and other things like that. So it's a spiritual question. And in fifty pages of text he makes no reference to private labor. It has a reference to private property. The question we asked to make the speaker at a congress uncomfortable is linked to this approach. How do you know what a worker is if you don't know what the commodity is (for labour-power is a commodity), and in order to know what the commodity is you need to have explained the value?

[...] My clash is with what Rubin represents, what it serves for in a certain stage of capital accumulation that has material forms that differ substantially from the previous stage, which were those expressed by the mass organizations of the working class (whatever they were. It is more or less clear that there are no more mass organizations of the working class in general except in China, but there it has been decreed that getting rich is an expression of participation in the development of the productive forces, it is so "mass" that one can enter even if one is not a seller of labor power). Something substantially changed and the working class lost the political strength it had in the middle of the nineteenth century, where there is a continuous transformation, which are the needs of capital, they only spring from it in the very transformation of the material process of work that capital is doing, but which are expressed in the form of the political action of the working class. Because since they are needs of capital but run counter to the immediate needs of individual capitalists, it needs to take the form of a trade union political action of the working class. And that changes radically.

I started seeing it in the early 1980s. The second half of the 1970s is the last spasm of the previous phase, which seems to be going straight to the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. And what follows is a transformation in the materiality of work that fragments the working class more than it was, in an absolute way. For a whole mass of the working class, the conditions for the sale of labor power deteriorate, a much larger mass is transformed into surplus population for capital, and then there is a brutal differentiation in the conditions of reproduction of that population. There is a process of centralization of capital as a necessity of scale of production that until that moment had the way of occurring in each national space and that goes beyond national spaces, and that within national spaces the most powerful form of this was the centralization of capital as a property of the state. and this is not expressed by the capitalist class, but by the political action of the working class. And all this has a substantial change that is very evident with the crisis of the second half of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s. And then all those transformations in the materiality of the production process that were carried out in the political action of the working class begin to turn around, to be the opposite movement, it loses strength.

The USSR was the first time that a national working class took capital (its alienated social relation) into its hands and showed the power of this action of the working class until its dissolution. Then the working class fragments and confronts itself in a much more marked way. In the previous phase, what did unity give? "We are the bearers of the productive forces and that is why we are moving towards the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. That is our political objective in acting." That was the approach of the socialist parties with more or less lukewarmness, and they were mass parties. Why do we begin to criticize that the problem is not the development of the productive forces, that this is mechanistic, economistic, and that the problem is the will, that it is a free will? Now, since the will in the capitalist world is not free, when someone raises the banner of free will, it is that it has no force, because in order to advance in freedom one must recognize alienation. And no, they say that I freed myself from fetishism, I turn my back on capital... It is a problem of will.

A whole fragmentation appears: instead of being the generic unity of the working class as a general identity, now each one is an identity separate from the others that come together, and the problem is "that we do not come together". So, with Rubin, if fetishistic consciousness makes me suffer the pressures of abstract labor to give it stability of the economic system, then I declare consciousness free by nature and destroy the stability of the economic system... And what it shows me is the other way around: that what he calls the "economic system" makes me such a weak individual that I have to look at myself as if I had nothing to do with it because I am powerless to act on that process, on that unity. I can have very partial powers, but not that of confronting the capitalist mode of production as such, and considering concrete overcoming... They are all strongly idealistic proposals, which do not look at the materiality of work and cannot explain why I do not have political strength, because before I had it and no more. In front of me there was a point where I said: here I change something absolutely. And it was when the Thatcher government defeated the English miners' strike, which was one of the strongest unions in the world, where a whole series of social forms of individual reproduction had been reached (without any illusion about that) and suddenly... Because the image was that Thatcher's government was finished, and it was the other way around.

Another approach like Rubin's is the case of Holloway and the lines that come from that side. I have heard him at a conference falsify a verbatim quotation from *Capital*, a note in chapter I where Engels makes that observation (an occurrence) that in English there is the difference between *work* and *labor*; the first to refer to concrete labor and the second to abstract labor (which in no case is exactly like that). and Holloway reads it at a congress saying "alienated labor" instead of "abstract," from which it follows: let us free ourselves from alienation by turning our backs on capital, and the overcoming subject of the capitalist mode of production would not be the working class but the individuals who already live "outside capitalism." And they don't ask themselves what they are, why they seem to be outside of capitalism, and the miserable conditions in which they live and the impotence to advance in the development of the productive forces that those parts of society have. And he argues that on the other hand, the working class is a

reactionary subject, an enemy of the overcoming of capitalism because it lives off capitalism.

Chapter II. The exchange process

[…] Marx is going to start this movement in circulation with: well, we saw all the powers that the commodity has with respect to the producer. But now we go to the process of exchange and what appears is that the producers have full control over their commodities. They no longer present themselves as producers, but as owners of commodities, who have the power to dominate them. Marx uses the figure that commodities cannot go to the market by themselves or exchange themselves, and that if they want to resist going to the market, the owners can take them by force. But immediately after that statement the analysis leads us to what we had already discovered in the previous chapter. The possessors are determined as personifications of commodities: their will is to bring the commodities into exchange and to realize their value, to represent them. How is the exchange made? It is an act where the wills of the two commodity holders converge, who have to recognize each other as private owners of their commodity. And it is a conscious and voluntary relationship, this indirect relationship is realized in the concrete form of a direct legal relationship, but which one enters already determined as the personification of commodities. There is a link between the economic relations which determine them as personifications of them, their consciousness and will is the relation of a personification, who enter into the direct relation not as persons (who as such are mutually indifferent, free individuals), but as personification.

Here appears the relationship between the economic base and the legal superstructure. Where does the condition of personification come from? Of the indirect economic relationship. Its realization takes the form of a direct legal relationship where the will to establish that relationship is manifested, but one does so as the personification of the economic relationship. That reference in the prologue of the *Contribution* to the economic base *determining* the superstructural, here its character is expressed, it is not an external relationship between two moments: one is the content (economic relationship) and the legal form is the way in which that content is realized, the value of the commodity cannot be realized if it is not by means of a contract of sale. Commodities cannot be sold by themselves; it always takes the form of a relationship between the wills *of personifications*.

The arguments that the superstructure responds mechanically to the base... It is not the relationship that is proposed there. Nor is it that the base determines the superstructure, but the superstructure has a relative autonomy and in turn has an impact on the base, but the base is what ultimately determines. Or the idea that the superstructure is functional to the base... That is what I call an external relationship: on the one hand the base, on the other the legal superstructure and they are external to each other.

What we are going to see now is the exercise of that alienated consciousness as personification, no longer in production but in the process of exchange. Exchange was presented to us as a movement of equivalence where any qualitative difference in the use value of commodities was irrelevant. Marx says: commodities are equal and cynical by nature, it is all the same to them to be exchanged for any, but to the possessor of commodities it is not the same. Here appears the double character of the commodity as use-value and value. The first qualitative

differentiation as use value is from the point of view of the possessor who leads it to exchange because for himself this commodity is a non-use value, it does not serve him by itself. What it has to have is use value for those who are going to receive it in the exchange. The possessor only cares that his commodity is exchange value, that it serves to exchange. In order to act as use-value, commodities must first have been realized as values. But first their use-value must have been made manifest, the receiver must recognize in them a use-value. And they can only demonstrate this condition by entering into exchange.

To deliver his commodities in exchange, which is not a use value for himself, he is only willing to deliver them if in exchange what is going to be delivered to him is a use value for himself. One looks at this and it seems to be an individual process: the decision whether or not to exchange the commodity depends on him. But at the same time what matters to the possessor of the commodity is that his commodity is *recognized* as value, that is, that it is exchanged for a commodity that has the same value as the one he is delivering and does not care whether or not his commodity is a use value for the one who is going to receive it. And whether or not it is recognized as a value is a general social process, because this is where the social character of the labor he performed is revealed. What he is going to add is that since each one is at an opposite pole to the other, it cannot be that for everyone it is at the same time a simply individual process and at the same time a social process. In this clash of wills between personifications of commodities, what will appear to each of them is that, as he compares his commodity with all the others as a possible object of exchange, he sees the others as special equivalents of his own, inverts the thing and sees his own as if it were a general equivalent (which would imply that his is a bearer of value and the others have to prove their V). Since they all look at it this way, the commodity of none of them can actually function as a general equivalent, and therefore there is no commodity that is recognized as a general equivalent that represents social labor performed privately.

Faced with this point, what Marx is going to propose is: when we unfolded the determinations of the consciousness of the owners of the commodity, it seems that an irresolvable contradiction has been reached. Because for each of them their commodity is the general equivalent, they have no way of equating their commodities. So Marx uses a second figure referring to Goethe's Dr. Faust, who has the doubt of whether the word or the action came first, and Mephistopheles is going to come and solve it. Marx says: and before they can solve this they throw themselves into action and carry out the process of exchange. The question is how it is that this thing that seemed impossible to solve, is resolved by this fact. And why can they launch an exchange? Because there is already a commodity that is universally recognized as a general equivalent, that functions as money, that problem was already solved before. The process itself has been concerned with separating a commodity as such.

The question is: how is it that it already occupied that place if it cannot spring from the relation between these private possessors of commodities in exchange? It cannot spring from that movement because that commodity recognized as money, its producers have the privilege that they do not need to prove that the product of

their labor is socially useful, they produce the representative of social labor and enter into exchange by possessing it: the dream of any commodity producer. When we started and said that the first paragraph of the first chapter puts us before the commodity in the capitalist mode of production, it is the result of a historical development. When we look at it as a simple historical result, we cannot answer about this determination we are looking at. We must then get out of that commodity which is the product of private and independent producers, private owners of their means of production, mutually free individuals who perform their individual labor privately and independently with full control, and have no control over the social character of labor. And we have to look at the historical genesis of money, which we can only look for in the genesis of the commodity. Marx is going to make a historical development put in very simple and general terms where concrete forms of certain historical processes are going to appear, but he is not going to stop step by step in all the historical forms of that development. In their origin, the commodity and money are the opposite of what we have seen so far, but in their development they are transformed into what we have seen so far. So I have to get out of the capitalist mode of production to see it. Then we will see that the capitalist mode of production starts with money already present, and that it will continue to be transformed.

The development of the process of exchange culminates in the splitting between commodity/money. In this development, the exchange of a commodity for other definite commodities will appear, but what is exchanged does not yet have the character of commodities *before* being exchanged: it is in the act of exchange that it acquires the character of a commodity, it is not *produced as commodities* (product of a SNALdPaI), as a non-use value for its producer. It is useful for exchange because it is a use value that exceeds the immediate needs of the possessor, he has leftover, even if he had use value for himself. The commodity that we have as a result is then the opposite of the commodity in its origin, which was the product of the work of a collective subject (community) that does not relate to its interior through exchange but through bonds of personal dependence, and that *outside the community* will appear as the private owner of what exceeded its consumption needs. And since use-values have an objectified existence outside the human being, they are alienable. And the change is going to enclose a reciprocal alienation, and simply the exchangers have to recognize each other as the private owners of that which they are going to change. Who is the subject who carries these conditions? In their beginning, they are not two subjects whose consciousness is alienated in the commodity, their consciousness is determined outside of this exchange relation, the proportions of exchange spring from the will to exchange.

I give an example, although asymmetrical, because those on one side are owners of "full-fledged" commodities and on the other side they are not, but they face each other in an exchange relationship [He is going to put it below, that of Columbus]. And how much each one gives and how much he is willing to receive, does not spring from the normal unity of the process of social production and consumption, but from an undetermined will like that of what we know about the possessor of a commodity, free because it is alienated. Exchangers are not mutually free individuals, and therefore their will is not determined by the exchangeability of commodities for their value.

Alejandro: Do you face each other as individual individuals or as a community?

JIC: On behalf of the community. There is (or was) a Marxist anthropologist named Gordon Childe who researched this type of movement. It has a moment when these incipient forms of commodity begin to appear 60,000-70,000 years ago. The manifestation of that is that it finds cross... One might think that one can discover that moment because remnants of that moment remain, and if there was a change of things whose remnants did not survive 60,000 years, it may have started earlier. But in a community that does not produce a certain kind of use-value, there are remnants of that use-value, and in another community that does not produce use-values that the first one does, there are remnants of that use-value, and so on. From that he will infer that there is this incipient process of exchange between communities.

Marx says that this begins accidentally because communities find that they can circumstantially produce more than they need to consume, and then the process of relating to other communities through exchange begins. The fact of being able to have a use value that cannot be produced enhances the production and reproduction capacities of each of the 2 communities for production and reproduction of their lives. The next step is that now they intentionally produce beyond their need because they aim to enter into the relationship of exchange with the other community. So the exchange of commodities begins where the community ends, where there is contact with others. This makes possible the development of the productive forces within each community, and begins to present itself as commodities *within* the community.

And then a further step will appear: in what quantitative proportion is it exchanged? There is no common substance that is going to be expressed in this relation of equality: it depends on the will of the owners of these commodities who decide to exchange them with each other. […] In the example of the asymmetrical relationship, that for one the commodities were commodity, and for other use values that are exchanged, the classic child figure of the conquest appears, of Columbus handing over colored glass beads in exchange for gold. In this exchange there is no substance that sustains equivalence, but the will of those who exchange. For those who received it, it was money, but for those who gave it, it was not: it was a use value with certain symbolic properties due to its material conditions.

[…] Hence the exchange relationship. This exchange relation has the potential to develop the productive forces of labor. The next step that Marx is going to take is: one enters into these exchange relations periodically, it becomes necessary to reproduce the life of the community to produce these use values as commodities. And then the commodity begins to have the condition of commodities in its production process and the magnitude of the exchange begins to be governed by custom... But what does this custom contain? The more commodity production unfolds and the more the bonds of personal dependence within each community are dissolved by the power of the commodity to multiply the productive forces, what increasingly governs what is custom is linked to the possibility of reproducing in a normal way the supply of use values as commodities. What is the

normal condition? That the individual can dispose of the product of a certain amount of labor that corresponds to the amount of labor that individual expended; not because they agree on the quantity of labour, but because the very movement of the condition of reproduction of a commodity producer imposes this proportionality. But before that can be fully developed Marx is going to take the next step, which is the emergence of the general equivalent.

The movement of exchange requires that for the possessor it is not a use-value, but a means for exchange, and that it be a use-value for the one who receives it as equivalent to his own, which must have use-value in order to be an equivalent. The mediation of money has not yet appeared, but it will be the beginning of its genesis. First it is circumstantial, then it settles on certain commodities and becomes this recognized general equivalent. There is no specific concrete reason why this role should correspond to this commodity and not to that other. But Marx posits that certain conditions in this role... He is going to give a series of examples that they are usually commodities that come from outside, that it is easier to dissolve the bonds within the community than one that comes from within, and that it has to have certain properties. And cattle are going to appear, and one of the things that will never fulfill that role is land ownership. Why is this function going to be established in certain commodities?

Money is going to put its body so that all the others express their value in quantities of that body. What one has to look at is what attributes the *body* of a commodity has to have in order to function as a general representative of value. And Marx says that while gold and silver are not money by nature, money is "by nature" gold and silver. What requirements must the materiality of the money have? It must be homogeneous (it cannot have differences in its use value), it must be fragmentable and unitable to express different magnitudes of value, it must resist the deterioration it undergoes in contact with the environment (precious metals contain this quality, they do not oxidize, etc.) and they must gather in a relatively small mass of their body a greater mass of value, to avoid the problem of having to move a huge mass of that commodity to represent a lot of value. Because gold and silver are very difficult to find and extract from the earth, relatively small amounts of use-values contain large amounts of SNALdPaI.

Javiera: About casual exchanges, there is an anthropologist, Wolf[65], who talks about the production of surpluses in these communities, he refers to this as a "ceremonial" fund that the community produces to establish ties with other communities. And there is nothing casual about that background. And 2) why this reference to the fact that land cannot function as money?

What Marx proposes that this is the second step, is no longer the community that fortuitously surplus and enters into the exchange relation: it produces *so that it has more than enough*, because it wants to enter into the exchange relation. In these communities, the process in which the quantitative determination of the exchangeability of commodities is approaching, the more the commodity production becomes more generalized, and within the community, the exchange

[65] It's probably Eric Wolf, a Marxist anthropologist and historian.

relation is more and more governed by the quantities of labor expended in producing these commodities. There is a process of transition from pure arbitrariness (Columbus and the glass balls), in which one knows what is being changed on both sides, but the proportion of change is fortuitous, voluntary. The more the bonds of personal dependence within the community are dissolved, the more the reproduction of the life of that community is subject to an individual spending a certain amount of labor and being able to dispose of a quantity of means of subsistence that replaces that amount of labor that he spent, of means of production that he spent. etc.

The dominant Marxists say that Marx never posits a community of simple commodity producers, that it never existed, and that this is an ideal construction, that capitalism did not develop from those societies. The problem with these statements is that Marx says that the development of the form of value is the development of the commodity form. It begins with the simple or fortuitous form of value. When we reach the end of Volume 1 we will see what the proposal does with respect to forms of private property that correspond to the simple producers of commodities, what is transformed into their negation, etc. And in Volume 3 he says strictly in one paragraph that simple commodity production is the historical presupposition of the capitalist mode of production (now they say that it is a distortion of Engels).

If one looks at the communities of simple producers of commodities, the first thing one has is that they cannot exist in their purity because they have no way of establishing unity. But unity is that when there is a surplus of a commodity, its production is reduced, and if there is a lack it is increased, because of what happens in the movement of exchange. If there are plenty of shoes in a community of simple commodity producers, and there is a lack of gnocchi (and the producers of s cannot produce them because they have means of production that are only useful for producing *S*), then in the concrete movement of a society of simple commodity producers the general unity is always governed by bonds of personal dependence. Marx's example of the free peasant and the free artisan of feudal society, as we have seen, has its production governed by a lot of bonds of personal dependence: the royal mercy to be able to produce *x* commodity, given to the guild, which regulates how much is going to be produced, whom, etc. Among simple producers of commodities it is very difficult to establish autonomously, automatically, the unity between production and social consumption, because production cannot be moved from one side to the other. Forms of regulation then persist that make it a private labor of the artisans, who sell commodity, at the same time the unity of this process is governed by direct links.

This mechanism develops until there is no direct link and the unity is established indirectly through the representation of the SNALdPaI materialized in its product as the social attribute that it has of being a quantitatively determined value. This shows the power of the commodity, it is an impersonal objectified social bond that dissolves the bonds of personal dependence where what mattered was the attribute of the person. I gave an example related to the history of Argentine football clubs. That it is like a bond that is not one of personal dependence, but that tries to overcome the indirect link of the commodity in a

direct relationship, imagined as a relationship between equals, free, where there is no reciprocal coercion and so on; and they end up being the most brutally visible sources of the bond through money.

At what point does this turn around? When capital appears to impose itself as a general social bond, and commodities cease to be what we know them to be. The synthesis is that commodities are not born as the product of private and independent producers. Their production was organized by ties of personal dependence. Its exchangeability springs from the will of the exchangers. And as the exchange of commodities develops, this is turned around. The exchangers enter as personifications of commodities, in contrast to the primitive exchangers. Value will arise from the action of the primitive exchangers, whose action was not governed by value, unlike now. So with money there is also that inversion: it is not born with the developed commodity, with the developed value. It is born as a third party who facilitates exchange, a mere mediator, and as commodities develop into those of the capitalist mode of production, it becomes the representative of social labor. Commodities behave as special commodities of money, the general commodity. Marx recalls that the one at the pole of the equivalent does not express any quantitative determination of the magnitude of its value. Not even gold can express the magnitude of its own value. If one wanted to express the value of gold as money, and maintain the evidence that it is money, one has to unfold the relative value of money in the body of all other commodities.

Earlier I raised a question: gold as money has this double function consolidated: it is a use value like any commodity, and it is a use value as a representative of value. Gold expresses its value when it enters into the first exchange relation with a commodity. Later we will see that the producer of gold never sells: he always buys (gives money in exchange for a use value). And when it enters general circulation as money, it has a value that is given by the amount of labor it cost to produce the gold. Then he is going to propose in the historical process how gold is going to acquire these concrete determinations, and that what has caused it to have been separated from other commodities as money is not its value, but the form it has as value.

The passive role of the equivalent is reversed in the *appearance* that the use-value of special commodities is consumed outside the exchange process, while money remains in exchange all the time and seems to have value as a natural property. Then, the consciousness of the general unity of this atomistic movement that the independent producers of commodities have, who face the product of their labor as an objective existence with the power to dominate them, which in turn is objectified in gold, and only then does the unity of the process present itself to consciousness when it looks at gold. in the form of the fetish of money. The enigma of this fetish is none other than that of the fetish of the commodity, which here appears in a fully visible way: money has the general power to bind all individuals. Remember what Rubin said that money is what has the power to make commodities values.

[…] One is not making an unfolding in which one thing ceases to be one thing and becomes another: one is transformed into that, and it is fully that when the

production of commodities is fully developed, when the commodity is the universal form of the product of social labor. Then courage can take on the fullness of its determination. The first thing we faced with the commodity was that it was an exchangeable object and we had to explain where this attribute came from, which was private labor, which in its purity is an individual producer (we will see that in reality commodities are not produced in this way: they are the opposite of individual labor, but that is how it is presented in the capitalist mode of production).

There was a time with strong discussions about the capitalist mode of production in Latin America: whether it began before, during or after the Spanish conquest. And what was the mode of production in Latin America at present was discussed. When one looks at the historical development of the generic human being in broad phases, one can distinguish the modes of production. But what it cannot do is stop development there, if what it wants to do is to contest itself about the immediate concrete forms that the organization of social production takes at a given historical moment, in a specific context. When one looks at the concrete forms of the capitalist mode of production, one sees ways of realizing the general social relation, places where there are very present bonds of personal dependence that say who can or cannot participate in a certain production... So what one has to distinguish when one has to act is that in order to arrive at the immediate concrete movement, one must first look at the simplest and most general determination and advance under more and more complex concrete forms. And one in *Capital* is going to reach a point of development that when you want to answer what we propose as a starting point, about its political action, you are going to say: but I lack a lot of concrete forms. The problem with reading *Capital* is not convincing oneself of what one says to oneself (or that someone else tells you), but it is about subjecting oneself to criticism of what one finds. If you take it as something you need to answer to, it will appear as a singular interest of yours, but you cannot stop until you answer it even if others do not give you a ball, one cannot accept something uncritically, one has to produce one's conscience and not stop at appearance.

[...] [On unproductive and circulating labour] To circulate commodities one must work. Gold must be produced in order for it to function as money. It is not that gold is produced for that, it has a series of other uses – to plumb teeth, to produce jewelry, etc. – but most of the mass of gold is produced to function as money. Does that mass of gold have value? Yes, according to what we have seen so far. According to what we are going to find in Volume 2, it is an unproductive expenditure of labor in general that does not produce value for capital. The gold that is going to function as money is not useful to reproduce a human subject, nor as a means of production, it is only a use value for circulation. Does it have value? The use values that have value so far we have seen that they serve to reproduce another human subject. Here we see that it is a necessary production as a result of how social labor is organized as private. And there what one sees is that there are individuals who work and do not produce use values for human life. Marx sets it aside, goes ahead and this proposal appears at the beginning of Volume 2 and of the work of circulation *for capital* in Volume 3.

The question is: what is its character? So, the problem is: do we stop to look at that? And I would state what I find in this regard, not attributable to Marx. The other option is to forget about this and continue moving forward with the text after reviewing what is necessary in chapter II. Chapter III is about money as a measure of value, a standard of prices, and a medium of circulation. It will appear here why it makes sense to replace gold with signs of value. But the work of circulation will appear much later, even in Volume 3 fully with commercial capital.

[II]

[...] What social form does the labor have that must be carried out in circulation, and in production, to produce the commodity that is going to function as money, when both are social labor (they are useful to other individuals) and at the same time are carried out privately and independently?

I start with the commodity producer who produced his commodity and has to bring it into circulation. How do you organize your labor in circulation? He knows that the commodities have to be sold. I'm going to take very primitive forms to make it clear. The commodity producer has to spend his body transporting commodities, because that is part of the production of use value. The *G* that are in the kitchen of the restaurant, for me, as a meal, are not a use value: they become such fully when they are placed on a plate in front of me. The work that is done to transport them from the kitchen to the plate is part of the process of producing the use value *G*. The problem is that they have to sell me the *G*.

Let's suppose the craftsman who produces S and who knows that he has to dedicate a part of his time to a conscious and voluntary activity that his body spends not to change the use value of the shoes, which are the same at the moment they come into circulation. Let's suppose you go with a pair of Ss to sell, and you are lucky and as soon as you stepped on the road, the buyer appeared and took the pair of *S*. And he is unlucky and spends 10 hours shouting in the market to sell, until the buyer appears. What does it mean to have to work in circulation? Not only did this individual have to consciously and voluntarily expend his body to sell the commodity, but during that time he could not dedicate himself to producing more *S*. The time of circulation, from the point of view of the availability of the society of use values, for the direct or indirect reproduction of human life, is a double loss: a labor power that was expended and that could not be applied productively. But this expenditure is a condition that springs from the private and independent character of social labor.

What Mr. S does is organize his work in circulation with a work that is simply individual, he has to satisfy a need of his own, the same as if I get food, so he is not mediated by the need in that very process of a social bond that transcends individuality. So far there is no problem: the individual wasted labor power uselessly, and instead of having 2S to sell, he has only 1S because he did not get a buyer. The problem arises when, instead of being the producer of commodities who is going to sell them, there appears a private and independent subject with

respect to the producer of commodities specialized in selling other people's commodities, not in buying and reselling (we will look at that when we get to Volumes 2 and 3), who has a capacity to shout very loudly and offers himself to the producers of commodities. There is a social labor expenditure made to satisfy a need of Mr. S that is not a need of person, but of personification.

In circulation, we have to distinguish the work that satisfies the needs of the person from that which satisfies the needs of personification. When gold is produced to produce jewelry, or to be an electrical microcomponent, it is a use value for people. But when it is destined to function as money, it is not a means of life or production, people cannot appropriate the materiality of that use value for themselves: it is so for their condition as personifications. What about the private, independent production of use-values *for* circulation and thus for personifications? Since there is no bond of personal dependence, the only way in which that social bond that is needed between the producer of commodities and the seller is to take the form that what the one who is going to sell commodities produces is a value, it is a materialization of SNALdPaI, but that it does not enter into people's consumption.

It is a society that has a mass of labor power carried by its productive members, which has to be applied privately and independently for others. Some of it is spent uselessly because it does not produce social use-values. Society will have the product of a quantity of labor that is less than what was expended to reproduce its life, because it was spent in a socially useless way, and it will not be able to be represented as value. But if we look at the private and independent labor that is done to circulate commodities = to convert commodities into money and money into commodities, it will be represented as value, but it will not have produced a use-value that serves human life. There are going to be a number of things circulating as commodities that are not social use-values, and consequently, the labor expended by those who did the circulating labor is a consumption that can only be satisfied at the expense of the labor of those who produced to satisfy human needs. So, society, in order to reproduce its life, is going to need to consume the product of those who did the work that produces use values for human life, but it is not only appropriated by those who produced it, but those who did work to satisfy the needs of circulation will have to participate in that consumption. It will be represented as value, as the ability to buy products, but which runs at the expense of the productive labor *of use values* for human beings. Because they are going to have to pay the one who performed the circulation work with a part of the value of the commodities they produced, and they are not going to be able to consume that part of the value themselves.

The same happens with the production of gold to function as money. Suppose that every year this gold is produced, worn out in circulation, and disappears; and that society has 100 units of social labor, but 10 have to be spent on producing gold money. It has only 90 left to produce use-values for life. But in the consumption of what those 90 people produce, gold producers are included, who have not contributed to those 90. But that labor has to be represented as value, because if not, they would not be able to buy the products of the other 90. It is a society that works 100 but only has the life of 90 to reproduce. And the works of

circulation are a necessary production because of the way in which the process of social metabolism is organized.

The guy shouting, it would seem that it is a work that is not objectified in a use value separate from the work that is being done. But let's imagine an individual who produces megaphones and that a part of his buyers use them to go and cheer on his team on the soccer field. It satisfies a person's need (we know that use value arises from the stomach but also from fantasy), that is, shouting louder through the megaphone. So far it is the same as the plate of food he ate before going to the field. Up to that point, it is the same as the plate of food that was eaten before going to the field. But now it turns out that someone buys the megaphone because they realize that their voice takes too long to reach the buyers and they always end up selling last. The same megaphone is bought and will only be used to shout in the market: that satisfies a need for personification, even if it is the same use value. But social labor must be assigned to produce the megaphone that will be used in circulation, which has to be represented in its attribute of exchangeability.

I look at a construction worker who is building a house and is satisfying a need of people. But I look at the same individual building a bank building, whose only function is to transform money into commodities or commodities into money (or worse), and that produces no use value for human life. Is there a difference between these 2 individuals? When we look at the determinations of the working class, we are going to be confronted with this question of the use values produced for circulation, which must be posed when one looks not only abstractly at the process of production, because there are also things that are produced for circulation and that are not... If one is going to say that the labor of circulation does not produce value for the commodity that is to be sold... But, if it is done privately and independently, its product *needs* to be represented as value.

I give another more immediate example. I see a commodity producer who is not a worker. Let's say you work alone in your shop and produce bodies privately and independently, and you're producing one for an ambulance and one for a cash truck. When it produces the truck, which is the same use value – and let's imagine that it carries the same expenditure of social labour, therefore they have the same value – it is satisfying a need of circulation as opposed to the other that satisfies a human need, one is an expenditure of circulation and the other is not. Gold has a double use value, when it serves to function as money it needs the labor that materialized in that production to be represented as its value. The shock was that Marx later says that it has no value. And so, what one finds then very generally, is that this contradiction is overlooked, it is said that when it appears to have no value, it does not matter and one moves on. And throughout Volume 2, Marx at every moment that he has to explain some determination of value, is going to say: we are going to consider that gold is money (in Volume 3 as well). So, one cannot overlook the statement that it is unproductive labor of value, because it would invalidate the whole development. That is why for me it is important to stop at this question from the outset, because if not, one is going to make a series of developments that when one reaches a height one will have to say that everything he was proposing up to that moment did not make sense. I have to start again, but for that I have to consider this.

[Gonzalo asks why this circulation work cannot be considered to be valuing the capitalists' commodities more.]

For the time being we do not have capitalists but producers of commodities. I take the S pair and sell it instantly, and [in another case] 10 hours to sell it. The use value of the pair of S did not change, there is still the same amount of work objectified in that product, its value did not change (although the price became more expensive). Worse still: there are cases in which the use value is lost: I am 10 hours with the cooked G and the use value has been lost. What the process of circulation may imply is that in order to preserve its use value, more labor must be applied, and depending on the normality of this extra labor, it will or will not constitute part of the value of the commodity. I have to put 50 units into circulation, because if I take them 1 by 1, the cost of transportation (transportation is a part of the labour that produces use value) would bring the total amount of labour expended to an enormous sum. I know that the 50 units do not sell instantly, I will have to spend on storing them, and that is part of the normal condition of producing this use value. But in the other case there is no transformation of use-value.

Gonzalo: When I grab an apple... One is not transforming use value, but in some way there is a valorization.

JIC: Yes, it is transforming it. It's an apple that's on a tree: if I don't have access to it, that's not a use value for me. It becomes a use-value for me when it is in a place where I can appropriate it. That labor is part of the production of that use-value. That is why all transporting labour is productive of use-value. Another example: a bottle, when it is in the supermarket warehouse packaged with a lot of other bottles that are inaccessible to me, is not yet a use value for me until it is on the gondola[66].

Gonzalo: Is circulation the period in which it is on the market until I buy it?

JIC: When I go to the cash register and the function of the person at the cash register is *purely* to transform commodities into money: *that* is a work of circulation. Now: it is not that simple either, because the person at the checkout, at the same time as registering the commodities to convert them into money, is updating the stock in the warehouse, and is participating in how the transport of that commodities from the warehouse to the shelf is organized, but also how their transport from the producer to the supermarket is organized. So it is participating in the process of creating use values, it is productive (regardless of whether or not it is productive for capital).

There are many discussions about how value is measured and manifested, and the valorization of capital, under the concrete forms of statistical registration. And therein lies the problem of whether one is going to differentiate between what is productive labor for people and what is productive for personifications, what is

[66] The shelf.

wasteful or not. Both are human needs, and in this society one can never fail to act as personification, and what seems to be mere wastes could be eliminated, but it is impossible as long as the organization of social labor is done privately and independently. Everything that is done in a bank is for circulation, but that which is done in the steel industry, part of it is for the production of use-values for human life and another for the expenses of circulation. The steel that is going to be used for the cash transport truck, when it was being produced, was not going to satisfy any need of the person. I look at the metalworker who is making the steel and I cannot know whether what he is doing is work that produces use values for people or that satisfies personifications. Marx will see it with the figure of the commercial capitalist who buys and sells, he sees it that way at the beginning with the M-C-M movement, and expenses linked to that movement will appear.

[Juliana asks if gold has value because it has social labor objectified in it.]

Gold has value, whether it is used for circulation or for a need of people, because it is a product of SNALdPaI. Then we will see the functions of money and what happens to gold as money, but that does not alter its value: it always has. The question is whether it can be substituted [as money] for things that have no value.

[Aristides asks about those who buy to sell.]

That's going to appear in Volume 3, from the middle to the end. There is a different situation: there is a change in ownership of the commodity and one has to see what is at stake, why there is an individual who sells the commodity for its value and another who sells it again at a higher price: What was the value? And later we will see what happens. Here we are not talking about something that is bought and sold, but that is produced for circulation, whether it is gold, or certain use-values objectified in the form of a service, or products separated from the production process. An observation in this regard: it is not simply what happens when buying and reselling, but it is something that one has to take into account when buying flour to make bread. When the baker bought the flour, he recognized that it was the product of a SNALdPaI. From the miller's point of view, the movement of his commodity has been completed and it has been recognized as a product of social labor. But imagine three things that can happen to the baker:

1) He used the flour, made the bread in normal working time, and sold it for its value. In the value of that bread is not only the work of kneading and baking it, but also the work that was expended in producing the flour, by a double determination: it is part of the work that was expended in producing bread, and also because of the issue to which you were aiming.

2) Let's suppose that in that society it was resolved from one day to the next that no more carbohydrates were going to be consumed. Then the baker made the bread and now that is not a social use value, that work is no longer recognized as socially useful. The one who pays the consequences is the one who bought the flour recognizing the miller the usefulness of his work, he cannot go to claim him.

3) His bread was burned and it has no use value. His work is now revealed to be socially useless because his product has no use value, and the work that the miller did in that particular form also ended up being useless, but for the miller it was already recognized. The baker will not be recognized as socially useful for the work he does, nor that of the miller, which he did recognize.

So, one has these determinations.

[Answering another question] One has to distinguish the product of value (new value that was produced) from the value of the product: in it is the value of the means of production that have to be preserved because they were part of the socially necessary labor to produce it, but which, since it was used in private labor, has to be recognized again as socially useful.

[…] The costs of circulation from the point of view of the human life process are wasteful, and then society in the capitalist mode of production tries to reduce these expenses as much as possible. Then we will see what happens with gold and signs of value, which is a way of reducing the unproductive expenditure of labor.

Gabriel: Wouldn't *they all* be the needs of the personification? The reproduction of the individual's daily life such as food, recreational activities... Are they not also for the valorization of capital?

JIC: Let's not jump into valuation because we are not there yet. What a use-value is for the person is determined by the general social relation. We said that what a use value is depends on each society, we did not say that cooked meat for me is a use value as a means of living and raw meat is not. The difference is that, does this expenditure to be made directly or indirectly reproduce a human body, or does it simply serve to transform commodities into money and money into commodities? With our consciousness as free individuals, as we are personifications of commodities, we relate socially as such, but we do not reproduce our bodies as abstract personifications: we are people who in our social relationship behave as personifications. If one takes it in immediate movement, what one will always have to do is to govern its production as personification, but it is doing an activity proper to people: to spend its body productively. And once he has the product of his labor is when he is going to act as a pure personification, he is no longer producing any use value that serves to consume as a person and reproduce the body, he is no longer acting as a person.

When we continue to move forward, we will see the concrete determinations that make certain people govern their individual consumption, determine what a use value is for them because of their condition of personification. We shall see how the personification condition develops, and where it will appear that this is a use-value for *this* or *that* reason; so far we have not asked why something is or is not a use-value. It is difficult to make an absolute cut between what satisfies human needs, what is a circulation expense, personification etc... The production of weapons to hunt animals is a use value for people, but if it is to kill other human beings, is it a use value for people or is it produced in the condition of personification? The bonds that one has with others for which sometimes one

would like to kill them and other times one will do so without consideration, have to do with determinations such as personification, it springs from the form that the social relationship has [...].

[Answering questions about consumption as a person or personification]

Circulation labor is that which produces things that only serve to make the movement of the social relation, which since it is an objectified social relation, must be produced, because social labor has this form. Then we have jobs that produce use values for people, to reproduce their bodies directly or indirectly (means of production that serve to produce means of living), a work that must always be done in any society.

Ignacio: When we say that for vegetarians meat is not a use value, isn't that why liberal sectors say that use value is subjective?

JIC: It is always at stake why something is a use value, and we have not seen that until now. What neoclassical economics proposes... And it is clear that use-values are subjective, that one always values use-values in subjective terms, but that has nothing to do with determining the value of commodities. It has been proposed since Smith with water and diamonds, and then Ricardo himself is going to put it, saying that use value is a condition for there to be value, but it has nothing to do with the determination of exchange value. This was already clear in classical economics. One always values in terms of use values, and valuation is subjective, but whether I value something much or little does not change its price (expression of its value). Neoclassical economics inverts it as if it were the determination of value. The question is what determines subjectivity. Why is meat universally a use-value in a given society, and why is it not a use-value in another or in a fragment of another society? There one has to see the concrete determinations of subjectivity, what place they occupy within the general social relationship and what concrete forms this social relationship takes for these individuals. They say that there is nothing written about tastes, but the price of commodities is all written: it does not depend on subjectivity.

Then we're going to look at how price can make something to me a use-value or not, but its value has nothing to do with how I think about whether or not that commodity is worth it. The price depends on the amount of SNALdPaI that was spent on producing it. What neoclassical economics does is to use "value" in the two senses it has: it appears as valuing "morally", just as I value according to its utility, so the prices of things are derived. And then it separates the substance from the form (value/exchange value) and the term "value" is left to refer to the magnitude of an attribute that commodities have. The assessment that each one makes... That it always does it in every form of society: this is a use value and this is not, this is an important use value for the life of society and this is a not so important use value... But this does not give rise to value, which is a historically specific form of social relation: it is not an abstract attribute, but the way in which the social relation is established between individuals who are reciprocally free because they perform their social labor privately and independently.

[Gabriel asks if the virgin earth is also the product of human labor and would have value, because we have influenced the shape of the atmosphere now, etc.]

May the virgin land be the result... In reality, everything on the surface of the Earth that is within the reach of human action, it is clear that at this point in the development of human life is a product of human action. This does not mean that this product has the form of the product of social labor carried out privately and independently. It is a consequence of human work being organized as it is. But there is no organization of the process of social life that is mediated by the change of these results of the action of work as values. There is an inversion in the image that in reality every expenditure of human *or non-human energy* produces a social relationship, but the social relationship is a relationship between people who are in the process of appropriating the environment (and in that process the environment is transformed by human action).

The issue at stake is how each member of society is assigned what useful labor he or she will perform. And the earth does not work, it is not a living subject: it is the inorganic substrate on which a series of living subjects of different "calibers" act: microorganisms, plants, humans. Microorganisms are a medium for plants, indirectly they are a medium for the human subject because plants are directly so. And what is at stake with the production of value is how the human subject organizes his action, how the use of the environment is governed. There is little soil that is virgin land today on the earth's surface. But as it is, you have to apply work on it to obtain a product.

[...] Any human action on the environment that does not transform it into a use value of which the human subject appropriates, but is the consequence of the production of use values... Human labor is not assigned to produce that medium, unless the environment is itself the product of human labor consciously and voluntarily. It is a consequence of human action. It does not take the form of value. The proposition that everything produces value is the fetishism of the commodity taken to the extreme. Fetishism is looking at the products of human labor as bearers of value by nature. The next step in fetishism is to think that nature *by nature* produces value. What is a historically determined human relationship, which transforms the environment in a certain way, becomes the natural action of the environment. In ecological approaches and in ecological Marxism, these inversions appear, this naturalization of social forms to the point of looking at nature as if it were itself the bearer of social relations.

Gabriel: This man also said that absolutely everything was mediated by work, so it is value. He gave the example of global warming as a product of human labor... And it made a little noise to me.

JIC: That it is the result of human work... Okay, but let that have value... If it is not a use-value, it is not the product of SNALdPaI, of work with the conscious and voluntary purpose of producing use-values... It can be a consequence of human work in its materiality. That this materiality is a manifestation of the way in which human beings organize our life process, too. But that it has the attributes of the commodity... If I did, that wouldn't happen with those subjects. It is the

naturalization of a specific social form from which all specificity is erased, and consequently, all possibility of acting consciously and voluntarily on it, my action will be blind.

Many times in that action that is put in this way it is implied that if the human being were not alienated in the commodity we would not do this. But we are: the question is why we do what we do because we are free individuals alienated in the commodity. What underlies all these proposals is: freedom is a natural condition of the human being, the capitalist mode of production fell from the sky and humped us to our natural freedom as free human beings, and now we have to oppose this that annihilated our freedom. And what we saw is that it is not a natural attribute, but a natural historical relation, and that the capitalist mode of production did not fall from the sky but is a form of the development of the human capacity to appropriate the environment, of the development of the productive forces. That at the same time, while it can, it "makes a ball" [destroys] the middle. Until it begins to involve spending more social labor carried out privately and independently making the environment than preserving it, and that's where the preservation of the environment appears.

[…] And that is the impotence that the ideological representation of the human being as abstractly free by nature gives, because then he is disarmed in the face of the concrete determinations that he has to face, and believes that it is a problem of an abstract will. And it is the basis of that specific determined will, and one has to advance in the development of the determinations of that will. […].

Xatan: I understood that a use value is social, not individual.

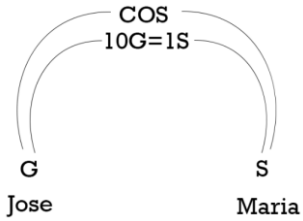
JIC: I said that we have to see how that individual subjectivity is determined. For one part of society something may be a use value and for another part it may not. The question is what is that subjectivity for which this is a use value, and what for which it is not. We said about the social and individual character of consumption (I have to appropriate the use value), that I consume products of social labor. Therefore, the determinations of my consumption already from this point of view have a social character. What is it for? To be in a position to return to work as an individual organ of the process of social life, for others. All work in society is governed by the social relations that prevail in that society, and in that sense it is not that the individual work that one does to consume oneself (one does not do it for others), is not social labor but it is socially governed: my consciousness and my [individual] will are socially governed. The confusion can come from this double meaning given to the social character: there is no individual who is not the bearer of a social being, and everything he does is an expression of his social being. But specifically, when we talk about social labor it is that which is done so that another individual has a use value for himself, and individual work when it is to dispose of a use value oneself. But it is clear that *all* work and consumption are socially regulated.

One is not yet explaining why the stomach and the fantasy want this and that. This will appear at the end of Volume 1, why some things are use values for a person and others are not. If we try to answer why this in Argentina is a use value

for a certain type of subject of social life, who is in such a condition with respect to this, this and this... That is what people who work in advertising, who operate on the alienated conscience at a certain historical moment on the basis of cultivating the appearance of human freedom, need to answer, because it is the condition for the production of a certain type of labor force with certain productive attributes, that in a society in which there are no personal attributes, it is achieved through the consumption of one use value or another. I'm going to state it but without discussing it now: Why are the same sneakers that have three straps on one side, and identical ones that have two straps on the side, for me not the same use value? Why do social subjects within the same society need to consume the one with the two strips? I would like to believe that one is of higher quality than the other in terms of its material attributes beyond the three strips, but I would not be so sure. I ran for many years, and I have worn different shoes, but what they sell me is that when I go running I'm just like Usain Bolt, I have the illusion that I have something in common with that individual. And yet it is not the same use value. [It's not mere deception, they are, in fact, different (to satisfy the fantasy).]

[III]

We were looking at where the movement of unity between production and social consumption is exercised, realized: it is in circulation. When we were about to enter into circulation, we found that how it is that gold has been separated as the general representative of value (and it is a privilege for the producers of gold), therefore representing the world of commodities, immediately exchangeable for any other. At the beginning of Chapter II, the owners of commodities appear having to act as personifications of commodities. And Marx is going to say that here there is an economic relationship that has the form of a legal relationship: the contract of sale (COS). It is one of the few times that the relationship between the economic base and the legal superstructure appears.



We are talking about a process of social metabolism, of human beings entering into a social relationship with each other. It's a relationship between people, and we're going to represent them as José and María. What is peculiar about this relationship between them? That it has the form of no direct relationship between people: they are reciprocally free. How do they enter into social relations?

Indirectly [smaller lines] through the production and exchange of their commodities (10G = 1S), which determines them as personifications of their commodities. And to refer to them as personifications, I call one "Mr. Gnocchi", and the other "Mrs. Shoes", because from the point of view of their social bond they do not count as José and María. And as personifications they enter into a direct, conscious and voluntary relationship that is the contract of sale (COS), a legal relationship.

Marx then goes on to say that this indirect economic relationship cannot be realized by itself: commodities cannot go to the market alone, they have to be brought in by their owners. Their holders can bind them, but they will act on their behalf. Then it will appear that the economic relation, which is the basis of this social relation, its content, can only be realized in the form of this juridical relation. They are not two mutually external existences: one is the content and the other is the form of the relationship.

[Gabriel asks him about ethics]

Ethics is an ideological form of economic relations. Marx groups legal and political relations and synthesizes them as ideological relations. The juridical relation starts from the appearance that individuals who are reciprocally free by nature are linked to certain attributes that are represented as ethics, which in practical operation are represented as morality, and reflect these forms of the consciousness of the commodity producer. It is not that on the one hand there is the exchange of commodities, on the other the ethics, which comes to play a role in the legal relationship: this would spring from the abstract free nature of individuals, it is the ideological representation of what the relationship between the owners of commodities is. The first of these is private property, a form of property that results from private labor. And he goes on to say: since the individual is free, he has the right (he is ethical) to dispose of what is his.

Chapter III. Money, or the circulation of commodities

Up to this point, money is not the active subject of the circulation of commodities, but it is commodities that circulate and move money. We shall see why in the circulation of commodities the one who is not the active subject appears as the head of the question, and what is in reality the content of what we are going to see in motion appears as a clarification. We became acquainted with the substance of value as content and its form as exchange-value, and the general expression of exchange-value in money as its price-form.

1. Measurement of values.

Marx begins by saying (and he will be like this in everything that comes in *Capital*): we will always consider that gold is what functions as a commodity-money. Many times he will repeat this. What comes next is that little bit of analysis that there is at the beginning of the chapters expressing the unity of the dialectical method. We know what gold is as money, which serves so that the world of commodities can express its value in a single body. One will find references not only to gold, but also to silver, and it will appear that if the expression of value does not have a single body but different bodies, problems appear with quantitative measurements.

The analysis continues and it appears that it is not money that makes commodities exchangeable objects: it is the other way around. Since all commodities are materializations of SNALdPaI (value), they are measurable in quantities of the body of gold and thus express its value. Money is the representative of the world of commodities, of value, it represents social labor done privately and independently. The question will arise as to why, if the value is quantities of labour, it is not expressed in quantities of labour, which has already been answered but will appear more explicit. It is because labor is not directly social and has no way of manifesting itself as social except through the exchange relation, as exchange value.

When Marx looks at this, he is going to refer to labor money or what in other translations appears as "hourly bonuses" or "labor titles." This is one of the starting points through which Marx is to make his development of the determinations of value, the discovery of its substance. This is going to be much more deployed in the *Grundrisse*, where Marx does not start with the commodity or with value, but with the problem of money, discussing the proposal of a Proudhonian, an anarchist, to replace money with hourly bonuses: someone does 10 hours of work and is given a piece of paper that says "10 hours of work". He goes to the supermarket and there is a label that says: "5h", "10h"... He takes these products, goes to the cashier, delivers the bonuses and takes the product of those hours of work. Marx is going to develop what this approach implies, to pretend that commodities are produced whose value is expressed in quantities of labor.

I summarize it: for this to be possible, there would have to be someone (person or organism) who would determine what concrete labor each individual who is going to produce what seems to be commodities in discourse is going to do. And he is going to have to say how much labor time has to be expended to produce each of these supposed commodities. Because if they are going to give me a bonus for the work I did that says "10 hours", I have to effectively spend 10 hours on producing that commodity. But if someone tells me that, they have to tell me what production technique I have to use to do it, and also give me the means of production I need to be able to spend 10 hours. You can't tell me that gnocchi is made in 1h with a kneading machine, because if I don't have it I can't spend 1h. And you also have to tell me how much of each type of product is going to be produced. And this is the opposite of commodity production, it is a direct organization of social labor presented as if it were commodity production. And then Marx goes on to unload on Proudhon (at one point they were even friends and comrades in political action, although they ended up very far apart). So something typical of private labor is presented as if it were directly social, this is the criticism of this inversion. And even within Marxism there are proposals to replace money with job titles.

Xatan: I have colleagues who wondered about whether socially necessary abstract labor is commensurable or not, and if it were, whether it can be done during working hours in that sense. Because otherwise we would enter into subjectivist theories of one's own value.

JIC: Abstract labor is never manifested as such in the value of the commodity. Because it is a social labor done privately and independently. And even the simplest form of its expression in normality is an average. I see two individuals working, and even if I said that I am going to measure the general working time they are spending – which also depends on the intensity of work, and so on – I am going to have different magnitudes because of the technical differences between one and the other. And it never manifests itself as such. When one speaks of the productivity of labor, what one is putting in relation is concrete materializations, but one is not comparing concrete labors immediately as such: one is comparing quantities of labor, and the only way to add them up is as productive expenditure of the human body applied to produce a certain use value over time. Also, the problem with measuring abstract labor done privately and independently, is that I can look at an individual who is working and I don't know if that is socially useful, if that is the socially necessary way to do it, if it is with normal productivity...

Strictly speaking, abstract labor cannot be measured *as such*, nor do I need to measure it at all, because it has an expression that mediates the movement of social relations. It's not that I miss measuring Ta: it's measured in the concrete form it has, its materialization as exchange value. When we move forward we will see that even the way in which value manifests itself is indirect, that it manifests itself permanently in the form of deviation from oneself. I can measure approximately, very roughly, quantities of abstract labor, without knowing whether it is socially necessary or not. If the one who spent the 10 hours is given the 10 hour voucher but to produce the commodity that he was going to produce it took 9 hours, are they going to give him the 10 hour product in exchange for the fact that in reality he should have spent 9 hours and not 10 hours? All this is

resolved in circulation, through change, in a movement that operates "behind the backs of the producers," as Marx says. It is not a subjective problem.

Value, the substance of which *is* definite *quantities of labour*, cannot be manifested in quantities of labour because it is not directly social labour. Marx's example: if he had a directly social job, he would say that So-and-so has to do this work, spending this amount of time, using these means of production and working with this productive technique, and he has to produce this number of units because this is the social need for what he is going to produce. In a society that had that character, it would not be necessary for one to be given bonuses for amounts of work, it would be assigned: since you work doing this, this and this, you are going to consume this and that.

In the capitalist mode of production this is resolved as follows: there is an individual who does this concrete socially useful work, puts into operation the normal production technique for that society, produces the normal quantity for that society... But the only way in which this social labor could manifest itself when it is carried out privately and independently is in the form of exchange value. The other would imply direct social recognition, and then no commodities would be produced. The problem is this: it is a material expense, objectified in its product, but it is expressed in this way. Looking at the consciousness of the commodity producer, we saw that alienation *expresses itself* in the form of freedom. If someone says to me: but where is the alienation? I have to look at freedom because that's the way alienation exists.

In this that your "opponents" raise in the discussion... It is as if I were saying that the relationship established through commodities does not exist, because I never see a commodity that is put in the place of the other, but individuals who resolve that what is in the hands of one passes into those of the other and vice versa. So it is as if they were saying that the legal relationship has no other content than itself. I never heard those proposals (although I know where it may come from, about work becoming abstract in change).

Xatan: It's not my position, but if one says: I can measure all the jobs and hours invested in that product, and then I see that in that market the product has the quality of being useful, I can recognize through an average or something that has been invested in each job this number of determined hours. What they defend in the end is that socially necessary abstract labor can be measured and you can say that in a given commodity this amount of labor hours is contained. I find that problematic but I don't know exactly how to answer it. That regardless of the usefulness of the object, if you recognize it later as useful, you just have to go back and see the number of hours that were invested in the previous jobs, and there you can say that there is a number of hours invested and you could respond.

JIC: What appears there would be: I have already seen something that is recognized as socially useful work. But the problem is that I have to express the value when that product is not yet recognized as socially useful. It is in the exchange relation that it becomes clear that it is: since it was changed, it was socially useful. Now I'm going to look at how it was produced, and my problem is

that I'm not going to have anywhere to go and look at it simply, because it's the average of a series of works by different producers independent of each other, who all produced the same commodity. Suppose I go and tell them: how many hours did you work? One tells me 10 hours, another 11 hours, and what each one produced, and I make the weighted average and say: this is the amount of work. Were all the units of that commodity sold or could some not be sold? Were they sold for their value or not?

And Marx is going to say: this is one of the advantages of the fact that value is not expressed in quantities of labour. Because if I look at the exchange relations between commodities, fully as products of capital in circulation, I will not see proportions of labor, but how these proportions of labor appear mediated (with another determination that is not present so far) and that will not allow me to recognize that here there were twice as many as here (not even if there were 10 here and there 20). And this is the way in which the unity of the process of social metabolism is resolved here, indirectly, a posteriori (if it were directly social it would be earlier). So, tell them to bring you a concrete measure of the amount of abstract labor and where they got it from. That one also has no quantity of hours of labour, but a mass of value, one may say abstractly: every hour of labour is represented in this quantity of value. But he cannot know how much work is locked in there, and he does not need to know because unity is established in another way, through change. But ask them to see.

Xatan: The worst thing is that yes, they do.

JIC: The question is how they have it done, it is not: "We count 100", but what is the quality of what they counted when they counted 100?

Xatan: Wait, I've found her and they also quote you [Laughs].

JIC: Worse [laughs].

Xatan: There it is, I've uploaded it[67]. Basically, he defends that value can be measured directly, that a calculation of value can be made prior to the exchange of the commodity. [...] The problem is that it is based on a deployment where he confuses the determination of value with value itself[68].

Juliana (Chat): A proposal only possible in a planned economy, and that does not solve the problem of value production...

JIC: Regarding Juliana's question, a planned economy where work is directly social... What we are going to see is that within private labor, work takes the form of planned organizations, but the question is that private labor has disappeared. I clarify that there is a line within Marxism, which I already mentioned [cybercommunism], which is the economic leg of socialism of the 21st century, which says that the value can now be replaced by time titles. All Ricardians continue to say that value is expressed in quantities of labor (it does not

[67] **Xatan** [Chat]: https://twitter.com/comradehector/status/1425801162452783107.
[68] **Xatan** [Chat]: https://twitter.com/comradehector/status/1425635147618168836.

differentiate between substance and form), which is what Marx criticizes. The problem was not simply discovering the substance, but why that substance takes a totally different form from it. They cannot answer it because they would have to recognize that this is not natural, but a historical form of organization of the process of social metabolism.

Let's move on, we have left. It follows that the expression of value in money is the price-form of commodities, it is the general relative form of value. And if one wants to see the relative form of the value of the commodity that functions as money, Marx says that you have to turn over the list of all the quotations of all the commodities that are in society, their prices, and each of them is going to function as a special equivalent. But the condition of money will only be recognizable if all the other commodities are displayed there. And the last aspect that is going to appear here is that money *is priceless*. The value of all commodities is expressed in money in the price-form, but money has no price because no commodity, not even money, can express the magnitude of its own value, the value of money can only be expressed by taking all other commodities as special equivalents. So, gold cannot function as its own equivalent. The price of all commodities does not tell me how much the value of gold is, but that of all commodities. Gold functioning as money is priceless.

Then it appears how this function of money as a measure of the value of all commodities appears in the consciousness of commodity producers. It is already socially recognized in their consciousness as the general representative of the value of their commodities, and *ideally*, they can express the value of those commodities by "putting on them some cards" with the quantity of gold, the price of those commodities. One can "ideally" measure the value of commodities with "ideal gold", imaginary, I don't need to have the gold to be able to measure its price. In this sense, by measuring the value of commodities, money functions as an imaginary or ideal money. Then we will see what happens to money when one wants to effectively enter the process of change. But even to that extent with ideal gold, what determines the magnitude of the price of commodities has to do with the socially necessary abstract labor that must be spent *materially* to produce not only the commodity, but to produce the gold.

By using different commodities as money, more abstract labour is contained in a quantity of the body of gold than in the same quantity of silver, even more than in the same quantity of copper, and I shall have 3 different prices according as I ideally measure the value in gold, silver, or copper, hindering the practice of the movement of exchange. Since here the function that money has to fulfill is to measure value, and the magnitude of the value that a certain amount of gold is going to have depends on the amount of abstract labor, in order to be able to *compare* the price of different commodities, even ideally, I have to have different quantities of gold. If to produce any commodity on the one hand and an ounce of gold on the other, it takes 10 hours of work for each one (I am going to put it in those terms that Xatan's friend wants, but which is not commensurable), its price is going to be an ounce of gold. But if another commodity required 20 hours of work to produce 1 unit, its price will be 2 ounces of gold. Different magnitudes of

value are universally expressed in the same body (gold) but in different quantities. And then there will appear (I leave it undeveloped for the hour) the need to establish a system of measurement standard to be able to measure it as for any other magnitude that you want to measure. What conditions does this pattern have to satisfy?

[Responding to Aristides about the 3 minerals as equivalent.]

It makes it difficult to change, because I would have 3 prices for the same thing (later we will see in the price pattern how gold comes to have a monetary name). And if the productivity of the labor that silver produces changes, the price in gold and copper remains the same, but if before the price in gold was twice as high as in silver, suddenly it is 3 times the price in silver. It makes the whole movement confusing. Already in Volume 3 it will appear with a whole series of complex movements, when you manipulate how much the exchange ratio is, and then the value of silver changed but not the exchange ratio x gold $=$ y silver, and it may be that one in the other is recognized as having more exchange value than the value that it actually contains. What happens (I don't remember if it is already in Volume 1) is that if silver is cheap compared to gold, there is a run on gold towards silver because sooner or later the determination of the value of silver is going to be imposed, and then the exchange is difficult, these phenomena of a run against one of the forms of money appear. And then the purity of this movement is achieved with money in the form of a single commodity. Because it was the universal expression of the value of commodities, its simplest form as they were all expressed in the same body.

There are examples in the history of Argentina with gold, where there are changes that make one to compare what were called the "pesos-fuertes" with the "pesos-oro". He cannot compare them one by one because they have recognized different amounts of gold in their body. It also happens with the same material: if the quantity of substance was changed *arbitrarily* (not because the productivity of labor changed), a quantity of gold appears with one name and another different quantity that has practically the same name as the previous one. We are going to see all this in chapter III.

I don't know if I'm going to look at what this gentleman says... [Tweet by Héctor] And on top of that, he says it on Twitter! Value is a historically specific social form. If communism is the directly social organization of the process of social metabolism, then value as a specific form does not exist. What Marx says is that the *substance of value* (the TaSn) is common to all forms of society, but it does not mean that this substance *exists as value.* In Volume 3 there is somewhere where Marx uses this, where he refers to value, saying that even if the capitalist mode of production is overcome... And he starts talking about price. Now: once the capitalist mode of production has been overcome, there are no prices, no commodity, no private labor, no value.

[II]

We were talking about the need for a standard system that allows certain defined quantities of gold to be compared with each other, a unit of measurement is needed and in relation to that unit to establish fragments of the unit and multiples of it. What is going to appear then is the function of money as a price standard. Its basis is the weight of gold, whatever object is going to function as money. This system is external to the determination of the value of commodities, what it does is to compare quantities of gold with each other. We will then be able to express the value of all commodities in quantities of that unit that we define to measure the price of commodities. What's going to happen to this price pattern feature? Gold serves as a measure of value because it is itself a value and therefore itself is variable, it changes according to the productivity of the labor that produces it, and consequently changes the expression of value in quantities of gold. The function of the price standard is entirely different because it is an external measure that compares different quantities of gold to each other. The more stable this system is, the easier it will do its job.

For example: certain amounts of gold must be named in money. This is the structuring of the pattern system. So, in its historical development, which comes from the system of weighing things with the scale, the pattern begins with the structure of the weight scales. It is something external to value. Sometimes we (Latin cultures) are used to the fact that every measurement system is a decimal system. So it seems that the problem of the price pattern is absurd, because I know that fractions of a kilo, for example, their multiples are tens, hundreds, etc. But the historical development of the price pattern comes from areas in which the metric-decimal system does not prevail. So they appear to be different proportions. The classic example is the old situation of English currency, which since the end of the twentieth century has been governed by the decimal metric system, but which historically had a standard structure that came from different places and formed that unit. There was the pound (£), which corresponded to 1 pound of gold, but there were the shillings (sh.), 20 sh. = 1£, and the pence (d.), which if I remember correctly, 12 d. = 1 sh.[69] Then conversions and comparison becomes more difficult.

There is another historical example of another standard of measurement which is the Treaty of Tordesillas, when the Kingdom of Castile and the Kingdom of Portugal divide the world, and establish that each corresponds to a line that is a certain number of miles away. And the discussion begins—because the pattern is wrongly fixed—of whether they are land miles or nautical miles. Portugal wanted them to be marine because they are longer and Castile terrestrial because they are shorter. And a large part of a series of historical processes involving Buenos Aires and Colonia (Uruguay) is where this line of the treaty passed because it remained on one side or the other depending on how it was measured.

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[69]I have corrected the measurements according to the "Table of Weights, Measures and Coins" which comes as an appendix in Akal's edition (Book I – Volume I, p. 415). Money appears divided into even more currencies such as the *farthing* (1/4 d.), or the guinea (21 sh.). This contrasts with the French franc (1 *franc* was equivalent to 100 *centimes*), which is closer to the systems that have been imposed today in most parts of the world, including England itself (currently, £1 = 100 AD).

If I look at the price patterns that existed in Argentina throughout my life, they changed about 5 times. There were the national currency pesos [M$N], then the 18,188 law pesos [$], the Argentine pesos [$a], then the austral [₳], and now these pesos [$]. And these are changes in the pattern structure, because what in the old pattern was 100 is now 1, and then, when you get used to one pattern and change it for another, this confusion occurs. This pattern needs to be stable and clear, governed with general validity in this way of organizing the process of social metabolism, and that pattern will end up being set by the state.

Marx will propose 3 factors in the historical process: 1) the incorporation of foreign money (which comes with a certain pattern); (2) the displacement of less precious metals by more precious metals as the mass of value to be expressed grows, which is increasingly difficult to express with a metal of less value; 3) the counterfeiting of money by princes (a display of this appears later). It ends up with the fact that the structure of the price standard must be regulated by law. There is a unit divided into aliquot parts, and we are going to have this determination.

[Answering doubts] The price of commodities is not to be named in quantities of value which gold contains (for value is never expressed in quantities of the value of another, but in quantities of its body). Now I have to name a certain quantity of the *body* of gold, which I am going to define as the unit of measurement of the prices of the different commodities. Where is the standard system going to derive from? As the way to compare quantities of gold is through weight, what is going to be adopted is the name of certain quantities of weight (in this case gold). And now we have to measure different magnitudes of value that correspond to different amounts of gold. In order to structure all this measurement, it is necessary to establish a scale of comparison in gold, which one could say comes simply from the comparison of quantities of gold in the balance, the name given to this amount of gold put in the balance, and what name I give for example to double the gold, in half, etc.

The system is a name, it is always external to the object itself. We have a standard temperature measurement system that is outside the temperature. If I say that water boils at 100º, it is because I said that this amount of heat is called "100º", and that if when you put it at half temperature the water does not boil, I call it "50º". We use the metric-decimal system for the generality of the measurements. Pretty much the only exception is the time pattern. So it seems strange to us that there is a problem between giving a name to this amount of gold and its half. One of the things that happens with this, if you take the hourly pattern system, is that when you have to divide a certain amount of time, you can't go adding 0 to incorporate decimals: you have to make a conversion to the lower unit when there's a remainder left, you have to take a fraction of a minute and multiply it by 60 to convert it into seconds.

In Argentina, 1 peso was a specific amount of silver put on the scale. And that is why the name of many coins retains the name as a unit of measurement of gravity. […] The pound changed to the decimal standard when shillings disappeared and 1 penny became one hundredth of a pound. And then he changed to what I meant by 1 penny.

The counterfeiting of money by princes... [It has been mentioned in the discussion] they were not changing the pattern. For example, the coin was called a "pound" because when it was weighed in the scales by a pound of gold. In the process of counterfeiting (I put it in advance), the princes call all the pound coins out of circulation to the smelter, remelt them, put half a pound of gold and half a pound of lead on each, and throw them back into circulation with half the gold content but with the same name. Each of them represents less value than before because it has less gold content, but the standard did not change. I take an example from Argentina where there is a change of pattern. From 1825 onwards, if I am not mistaken, there existed the peso fuerte [$F], a coin that had a certain amount of gold in its body. In 1882 the standard was changed, it was replaced by the stamped gold peso [o$s], which has a different fragment of gold quantity, and 50 cents of gold peso is not the same amount as 50 cents of strong peso.

Javiera: I don't quite understand how the changes in the productivity of labor produced by gold are expressed, while gold is on the side of the equivalent, it is not clear to me how this movement occurs.

[JIC explains to you with the diagram in Chapter I, section A.2.b) how changes in the productivity of labour affect the value of commodities that are relatively expressing their value and the expression of value.]

[...] I make this observation. We had come to the point that this has to be fixed externally and with a universal character. And then, the figure of the state appeared as opposed to autonomous regulation in terms of its form, because it is a direct regulation with a forced character, which is the bearer of a need that arises from the indirect relationship, which takes the form of a direct regulation in order to operate. But this produces a first contrast with the absence of a direct relationship of a compulsive nature between the owners of commodities.

Now we have quantities of money with a monetary name that expresses the value of commodities in quantities of that unit that has the monetary name. Marx observes: there is a development of the fetishism of money, it seems that the capacity of money to express value springs abstractly from its own name and not from the fact that it contains a substance of value. Here a definition appears, but it is not the point of departure, but the point of arrival: price is the money name of abstract labor materialized in the commodity. The price always expresses the equivalence between two commodities: the one that functions as money and the one that expresses its value.

Here the possibility begins to appear that there is a quantitative divorce between the content and the expression of that content. This arises from the fact that value is expressed in a proportion of exchange with money, but that does not mean that the expression of the proportion of exchange with money is unequivocally the expression of the magnitude of value. Marx is going to give an example without fully putting into the development what is at stake, it appears as a formal question: I bring a *quarter* of wheat to the market that corresponds to £2 because it contains 1/2 ounce of gold. The 2 have the same value because they are

the product of the same amount of SNALdPaI. Consequently, £2 is the expression in money of the magnitude of the value of the *quarter* of wheat, it is its price. But it may happen (he does not explain why here) that wheat is quoted not at £2 but at £3, or the other way around, that it is quoted at £1. So when the value of wheat is expressed in £1 or £3, there is going to be a quantitative divorce between the substance of value (because there is really only the equivalent of £2) and the price of wheat, its money name. The value of the commodity is expressed more or less due to certain circumstances. Here only the formal possibility of divorce is enunciated.

Marx is going to make an observation regarding money as hourly bonuses, which expresses quantities of work directly. Here the unity between production and consumption is established indirectly, and the way it is established is precisely the constant deviation from what the norm is, as something that is automatically regulated, and the norm can only be imposed as an average in the midst of the absence of any norm. No one says, "This is the value of this commodity," but value is imposed through the permanent diversion of the price of commodities from that substance of value.

In the next step, Marx proposes not only that there is a quantitative divorce between the magnitude of the substance of value and its expression, but that there is a qualitative divorce: things that have no value, and yet have a price. Things that are not commodities such as conscience and honor can be quoted in money and exchanged for money. So it seems that they were commodity. I have some reservations about conscience and honor: what is paid is the action governed in an "honorable" way. In this divorce appears something with a substantial relevance in the entire development of the capitalist mode of production, and in particular for the countries of Latin America, and that is that the uncultivated land, where SNALdPaI has not materialized, has no value and yet has a price. Here it appeared as a formal possibility. But to account for the reason for this condition, we have to wait until the end of Volume 3.

Up to this point we were still looking at the structure of the standard necessary to measure the value of commodities, and we had said that the quantitative proportions of measurement correspond to the materiality of real gold, but money can fulfill this function of measuring values as ideal gold. What is the condition for a commodity to express its value in a relative way? He has to enter into the relationship of exchange with the other, he has to transform his body into the body of the other, to take his place. In order for a commodity to be able to express its value effectively, it must replace its body with that of gold, it must be able to be alienated. And for the commodity to be alienated and transformed into the body of gold, it can no longer be an ideal gold, but a "hard and sound" gold. I can measure in ideal gold the price of all commodities, but in order to realize their price I need to have the real gold.

Here then the function of money as a medium of circulation will enter, now we enter into the effective movement of the exchange of commodities for money. In what we got so far in chapters II and III were the "prolegomena" of change, the conditions appeared, but the problem of how one had the privilege of functioning

as money appeared, and it unfolded: gold can function as money because it is value, but to measure values you need a structure of a price standard, and now we have it. Only now are we in a position to enter into the real movement of commodities by transforming themselves into money. […].

2. The means of circulation

a) *The metamorphosis of commodities*

Marx makes an observation in the postface to the 2nd edition where he speaks of the method and speaking of the analysis he says: if one is fortunate enough to have adequately reproduced the concrete from which one started, and has been able to deploy all the determinations of that concrete, it can always seem that one has been dealing with an a priori construction. And here some criticize that he grabbed things that were the product of work when he started, and that he could have taken the land and nowhere to find work as a substance of value. Why did he grab the products of labor? Because in this process of knowledge before expounding it or in the middle of the exposition he advanced enough to have discovered that the determination of value was the quantity of labor, etc. He started by taking a commodity and his essence is to be the product of work. Land that has a price is not a commodity. In the development that one is doing, the reason why one started from where one started has to emerge, give a reason for one's starting point in the exposition, in contrast to the logical representation where only the starting point is enunciated without accounting for it.

[Ivan asks to what extent this separation between value and price can be made]

Now we are going to see why the price of the commodity is separated from value, and Marx is not going to stop to look at the mechanism by which value is imposed in normality, in normal distribution... "Normal" because there is a type of phenomenon that does not have a direct regulation but an indirect one, but that has a norm that is imposed through permanent imbalance. Everything that is automatically regulated does so through a normal movement of deviation from the norm, like the tightrope walker, who if he stood still would fall: all the time he is falling to one side and each time he corrects and falls to the other. What is the deviation from the norm? Why does value have to be imposed through fluctuating prices? The mechanism is developed in Volume 3. In Volume 1 there is a reference, but it is a mechanism that when one looks at it at this point knowing only the capitalist mode of production by the simple production of commodities, is to force the explanation. […]

When we look at the process of commodity exchange, there were aspects of that process that are mutually exclusive. We start with the fact that there are contradictions here (between social labor and private labor, etc.), and what Marx is going to propose in this regard is: the development of the commodity does not suppress these contradictions: it creates the forms in which they can develop, there is no other procedure to "resolve" the *real contradictions* : they are not resolved but developed until they are overcome.

What we are going to have here is the movement of the process of exchange, of the circulation of commodities, which begins with the exchange of hands of the commodity that has a possessor for whom it is not a use value in the hands of another for whom it is. And this is where Marx is going to use the expression that it is a "process of *social metabolism*".[70] What is happening with this movement? When completed, the commodity leaves circulation and goes to the sphere of consumption (and at this point it is not relevant what happens in consumption[71]), where it is consumed, either as a means of subsistence or production. It is in the process of circulation, through which the process of social metabolism develops, that the exercise of the social relation as an immediate movement between the owners of commodities becomes apparent.

Before beginning the unfolding, Marx synthesizes the determinations with which commodities and money enter exchange, in the case of money as an expression of the antithetical unity between use value and value, which now appears as the conditions by which the process of exchange is to unfold. If one simply looks at the process of exchange as if it were a barter between two use-values, one loses sight of why the expression of value needs to take this form of money, and consequently the antithesis commodity/money appears. Commodities will appear as use-values, with money expressing exchange-value, and yet both are commodities, and therefore units of use-value + exchange-value. But what one sees on one side of the relation is use-value, and the general representative of value, the expression of the exchange-value of the other. The commodity (Marx is going to say) is a real use-value, but it can only express that it has *value in an ideal* way in the price, and in order to express it in *a real* way, it has to be exchanged for the gold that is at the other point. And in turn, the use value gold, its materiality, only intervenes here as the materialization of value (D), as if it were a pure representation of exchange value. And here he makes the contrast: their use-value is only ideally manifested in the relative expressions of the value of all commodities which refer to gold as their general equivalent.

To look at the movement of exchange, it is going to look again at the owners of commodities, but now it is going to start by saying: if the cycle of metamorphosis of the commodity begins with a commodity, which is converted into money to become commodities again [C-M-C], and there it ends because it enters into consumption, the first thing that is going to be looked at here is how this commodity reaches circulation, which is a non-use value for its possessor and aspires to become money so that its possessor can access other commodities which are a use value for himself. The process of exchange takes place in the market, and there it appears that the commodity has a certain price. There is a process of change of forms, executed through the consciousness and will of the owners of the commodities as personifications. The C-M transformation appears as a sale, and C-M as a buy. But every movement of metamorphosis contains this double condition. In order to accompany the deployment of this, what is going to be looked at is the unity of the movement: sell to buy. The movement then starts

[70] Marx, K. (1977: 65), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

[71] **JIC:** Some use this to say that Marx didn't care about use value, when we're dealing with this all the time.

with the sale. The money-commodity is neither sold nor bought. To sell is to transform commodities into money, and to buy to transform money into commodities. A little further on it appears that the gold producer never sells: the only thing he does is buy, because it is gold that he brings into circulation, he does not need to sell.

What is the result of the sell-to-buy movement? That the possessor of the commodity who entered into exchange has in his hands a commodity which has the same value as the one with which he entered into relation, but that the latter has a use-value for himself. And in this way he can come into possession of all the means of subsistence and production that he will need. If one looks at the material content of this process, it is M-C, but it is not the form that the process itself has. It is not a simple exchange of one use-value for another, because the first step in that process, the sale, does not simply enclose its form, but the content it contains is the recognition of the labor that is enclosed in commodities as socially necessary, and the commodity that comes in comes to prove that it has value: It is "the somersault of the commodity", but if the commodity does not successfully make this leap, since it is an inanimate object, the one who suffers the consequences is its owner, who could not transform it into money to transform it into a use value for himself: he was left without a social relationship because he did not perform socially useful work.

When we look at this movement, what is going to appear is a circumstance that Marx mentioned but did not explain until now. When we looked at the determination and expression of value, all we had was an isolated commodity. And now that it is becoming clear how the unity of the process of social metabolism is realized, we begin to find that each commodity is not an isolated commodity, but constitutes an exemplar within a species, a class of commodities. How is the concrete form in which the value of commodities is realized no longer as an individual body but as an individual of a collective body established?

[II]

[...] I make a clarification that I don't think I had come up with: in Spanish we have the advantage that we say "commodity", and then one has no doubt that this has to do with the market. English political economy traditionally used the term "commodity." And I believe (this is a hypothesis) that this word... I wanted to see if "commodity" originally had the meaning of "commodity" alone, because it has a double meaning beyond how it is now used for wheat, meat, oil... It has two meanings: one is "commodity," and the other is "good." I believe that it is strongly linked to the development of classical and neoclassical political economy where this distinction is not clear. Neoclassical economists *always* translate "commodities" as "goods", in the Ricardians the term "commodities" is maintained, and there are translations in which on the same page they translate as "goods" and on another as "commodities". For us, the term "commodity" is clear, which is linked to the market.

The process of exchange is what happens in the circulation of commodities. One has to see that there is a movement that unfolds from what began as an extremely simple concrete, which shows that under its concrete developed forms it contains a number of determinations that one could not see in its simple expression. And in this sense there is discussion about whether the first 3 sections refer to the capitalist mode of production or is it simple commodity production, because Marx says from the outset that "where the capitalist mode of production prevails". We start by discovering a simpler way and as we go along it takes on a concrete form that is the opposite of that simpler form. We start with the fact that no commodity can express value in isolation. When we come to the end of Chapter I, where money appears, we saw that it represents value even though it is outside the exchange relation (even if it is not its own value). Commodities are exchangeable because they are the materialization of equal quantities of labor... And so far what we have been looking at is the attribute of changeability and the analysis of the commodity to the point where Marx says: we have to get out of that exchange relation and look at the commodity itself; but since what we discover cannot be manifested there, we return to the relation of exchange.

We saw as an abstract possibility the divorce between the magnitude of the substance of value and its expression, even its qualitative separation. We took them formally because we had not seen the movement of the change in circulation, and the unit as such. Now we are looking at it as such and not at the isolated commodity, and we see the concrete way in which the value of commodities is realized.

[Ignacio talks about how money manifests itself today in ways that Marx could not foresee, and asks if there is any tool today to be able to see that.]

We have not yet arrived at forms of money other than gold with a monetary name and a price standard structure. And we have to criticize Marx's development: if we do not come to an answer for virtual money and he does not arrive at this simpler determination, he has to say that this determination no longer exists at this historical moment and now we have this other. If I look at it in general terms, I will find that the simplest determination of money is what we are looking at and that by such and such a determination it takes on forms of money that were transformed from this simpler one. There are statements within Marxism that say that this is no longer the current determination of money, that its value is determined by dividing total labor quantity/banknote quantity. But this amount of work cannot be computed because it is done privately and independently. Thus it is believed that the labor that produces commodities is directly social. I look at that proposal and say: this possibility does not exist.

On virtual money: there are transactions in which money only has the accounting entry (Marx talks about it in Volume 3), and only the form has changed. In the case of Bitcoins and the like, Marx discusses a form in Volume 3 that corresponds to that: fictitious capital. And one can explain it from these developments but arriving at more complex forms than what we got so far. And I believe that someone needs to take care of moving further. Caligaris and Starosta

advanced the development of more concrete forms of money than those that appeared in Marx. And they find the same starting point: gold. In this chapter we will see a reference to a very complex concrete form of money that Marx makes, very simple, and he deploys it there, but it was no longer the concrete form even in Marx's time.

We arrive at the unity of the process of social metabolism. What we are faced with is that there may be a type of commodity that has been produced in socially necessary abstract labor under normal technical conditions, but since there is no immediate unity between production and consumption, it may have been produced in excess or in excess of normality. And normality is the solvent social need that corresponds to the value of commodities. What happens to these commodities? Marx is going to look first with the ones that are left over. And what we are going to find in this situation is that there are surpluses in such proportion that they have lost their use value, and therefore their value. I always give examples that do not correspond to the simple production of commodities, but that show that what one is looking at is not an abstraction so far removed from the concrete forms that unity has. In the case of Argentina, there was a historical case like this.

In the crisis of 1930 it happened with wine: it was accumulating, there is no solvent capacity to buy it and there comes a time when the wineries of the city of Mendoza throw wine into the ditches. And one can say: this is the drunkard's dream, because he goes there and has wine at his disposal. In Argentina we have seen another expression of this situation in 2001 and we continue to see it, a couple of years ago, for example. Milk is produced, there is a surplus of milk, there is no one to buy it and the tanks of the pasteurization plants stop on the road and open the taps. At a time when there are nutritional shortages, especially children, and that which tried to be a commodity, lost its use value, its value, and at the same time that you see the trucks you see desperate people trying to rescue something to be able to eat.

These are manifestations that already correspond to the full movement of capital, but they serve as an example because they mark the difference between human social need and solvent human social need (and only solvent social need counts for the capitalist mode of production). The solvent has the determination to be able to represent itself through value, money as a representative, social need depends on the capitalist mode of production of commodities. If the value of commodities is lower, the solvent social need may be greater, if it is higher, the solvent social need will be smaller. In order that the unity between the given production and the solvent social need can be established a posteriori, it is resolved that the solvent social need must grow if there is too much because production can no longer be modified, it is given. And the way in which solvent social need grows is for the surplus commodity to be sold at a price below its value. If it is sold at a lower price, the solvent social need grows: individuals for whom a given commodity was not a use value because of the value it had, at the lowest price it becomes a use value that they can access through purchase.

So, we are going to have to have the late establishment of the unit of social production and consumption, because it is an indirect unit in which the social need has to adjust to the production that exists, it is going to be realized, in the event that there is a commodity that is left over, through the growth of the solvent social need. And vice versa: if a commodity is missing, and the solvent social need is higher than that which resulted from the process of private and independent production, it has to be reduced. And the way in which it is reduced is that the price of that commodity rises above the value, enough so that, given the determinations of the consumption of each commodity, the solvent social need corresponds to the volume that has been produced. The surplus is still recognized as having a use value except in examples such as wine. In simple terms, there is no price at which solvent social need appears on a sufficient scale if it has lost its use value: it must be thrown away. We see in this other case that if it retains its use-value, it does so on condition that it is sold for its value, because if it lost its use-value it would not be sold at any price.

If we had a case in which... Economists are going to talk about an infinitely inelastic demand, in which it does not matter how much the price changes [...]. How is it that one manages to sell and another does not? They are the concrete ways in which the exchange is carried out. This is the way. What does this movement contain in content? We have that value is the amount of SNALdPaI, and when there is a surplus, more than necessary was spent as a total mass of abstract socially necessary labor. Let us suppose that it retains its use-value on condition that it is sold below value: society is ready to recognize this socially necessary abstract labor as such, and therefore all the units of that commodity are to be realized. But what is going to happen to the producers of that M? They are going to put in a quantity of socially necessary abstract labor and since they are going to sell it below its value, a part of the value they materialized vanished from the body of their commodity. Which does not mean that it has disappeared. What is going to happen to the buyers of that commodity below its value? Suppose they sold their own commodity at its value, and now buy from another commodity underneath. They were fully recognized for the socially necessary abstract labor that they did and now they are going to receive the product of a socially necessary abstract labor greater than they are going to [...][72], they are going to have to deliver this value objectified in money in a smaller amount than what they are receiving, and what previously vanished was for the benefit of the buyers, it was absorbed in the general movement. Some put in too much abstract labor compared to what was socially necessary and that is why they took less. It is not that they spent more on each unit than necessary, but on the total mass they spent it in excess.

What happens to those who produced less? They are going to find that the solvent social need has to be reduced by raising the price. As they are sold above value, it seems that a new mass of value has been added to it, but looking at the unity of the process we find the following. Let's consider that those who bought those commodities above value sold theirs for value. They received the product of a quantity of socially necessary abstract labour equal to that which they performed, but in buying they receive the product of a quantity of socially necessary abstract

[72] There is a short cut in the recording.

labour less than that which they spent. That additional value that appears appropriated by the sellers of the missing commodity comes from the SNALdPaI that the buyers spent. Some put in a quantity and took more and vice versa, but all the socially necessary abstract labor that materialized privately and independently was recognized as socially necessary abstract labor, entered into unity, with the exception of this.

What is normality in the unit? That each one puts in a quantity of abstract socially necessary labor and takes the product of another quantity made by others that is equal to the one he put in. But since it is an indirect unity, the realization of normality can only occur through the permanent deviation of the price of commodities from their value. But in the process of circulation more or less value cannot spring from that which entered it, there is no way of multiplying the V; what does happen is that the appropriation of value is carried out through this movement. Marx is going to sum it up: substance of value has been attached or substance of value has disappeared. But this substance neither sprouts nor disappears in circulation: it passes from one hand to another—from the seller to the buyer if there is a surplus, from the buyer to the seller if it is missing. As it is a private job, the benefits are enjoyed or the damages that this movement has are suffered. In the case of the milk that was thrown away, what is left over reaches such a point that a solvent social need cannot arise, there is no way that it can be absorbed in consumption, that is why it is thrown away, it has lost its use value and its value. We have this central point in development.

I don't know if it makes much sense because it is deviating, but there are Marxist proposals that say that supply and demand enter into the determination of value. And then there is no normality (which is a constant detour), because if commodities are always sold for their value, no commodities would ever be sold below value. If there is a surplus or a lack of it, it will be sold for its value in that version. This has an implication later on because there is a commodity that appears in circumstances systematically sold below its value: labor power when there is a surplus. And if we say that commodities are always sold for their value, we would have that labor power is never sold below and that the working class would never have any reason to complain because it is being paid below.

And another question related to this is: why did this not appear when we looked at the determination of value in chapter I? The *total* amount of socially necessary abstract labour that was applied to each commodity did not appear. Because what had to be discovered there was where the attribute of changeability of the commodity springs from. If I begin by saying that there is no common quality, I cannot explain why commodities are exchangeable, that they are so because they are exchanged, and invert things. So when one starts not only does one not have in mind the general unity, but one cannot consider it until one has answered why the social relation has this objectified form and what determines the content of that social relation, the quality and the quantity. When one is looking at the ways in which this quality is expressed, what one finds is that it is not a defect of the price form, but a virtue, because commodities, because there is no immediate unity, cannot be immediately exchanged systematically for their value. The way in which

its value is realized is the permanent deviation from that normality, a norm that is imposed under the appearance of the absence of any norm.

Gabriel: Does the workforce also enter into this normality?

JIC: What does that put at stake? There are populations that are in a process of increasing deterioration of their labor force, can capital be sustained on that basis? We'll look at that much later. The simple normality is that labor power needs to be sold for its value because otherwise it would be exhausted. But what appears with this Marxist approach is that a population that is working starving to death is selling its labor power for its value. If a discourse appears that acts in the political sphere talking about supply and demand as determining the value of labor power, I can never complain. This is the brutality of this proposal, because it is wrong, but politically (and we start with the question of how we govern our political action), its consequence is that the working class has no reason to ever complain. And this is presented in the name of Marx.

It is not an abstract theoretical discussion: it is what this type of inversion leads to (the form put as the content). The content is the value, and it is exchanged for something that is not the value, for the way in which the value is realized. With this additional element: neoclassical economics makes a world of supply-demand relations because for them it determines the price. If one were an economist who wanted to be consistent, I would say that this is not so: it is the principle of diminishing marginal utility and increasing total utility that manifests itself in relation to the budgetary constraint on supply and demand, and that is why supply and demand are equalized, that is what determines the price.

As much as supply and demand are unbalanced, what is expressed in indirect unity is what we saw that some appropriated more and others less in exact proportion, there is no more or less value: everything went in. What I have to explain is what determined that everything entered, and it is not supply and demand but the SNALdPaI. Marx will criticize the image that the price is established by the relationship between supply and demand later on, and he will observe that when these are equalized they cease to act and therefore cannot determine anything. That is the point of normality: the explanation of value has nothing to do with supply and demand because they do not intervene.

[Gabriel mentions, with respect to the sale of labor power below value, populations such as Bangladesh and its textile industry.]

There is no need to go that far: throughout Latin America and in Argentina in particular, the entire population – if it can sell its labor power – is selling it below value. University professors are among that population.

Ignacio: Is marginal utility indeterminable? This moment when the supply and demand curve of the good intersect and then the price can be determined, is it applicable?

JIC: It is a purely ideological construction, and like all constructions, it is based on some concrete determination of reality. We talked about something the other time. It is true that one *values* commodities in terms of their use-values: this is for me, this is not. Concrete determinations of why one values them as use-value will appear later. But one does the same with things that are not commodities, which makes it clear that this determination as use-value does not determine the price of commodities. What does neoclassical economics do? It takes that appearance, turns it upside down, and has to transform it into a construction that can be expressed quantitatively. If I say: for me gnocchi are a use value, but I don't feel like eating them every day; I prefer to eat mustaches, I like them better. I'm valuing, but that has nothing to do with the value of these commodities. Since social need is solvent, here it appears not from how I value, but from the value of commodities and whether there is too much or too little. If the mustaches are more expensive, and I say that I prefer not to spend that and I am going to eat *G*, it is a concrete determination of my valuation of that object as use value because my general social relation has the form of value. But it has nothing to do with determining the value of mustaches or gnocchi.

Since the neoclassicists need to arrive at a quantitative expression, they have to make a construction in which they have to say: there is a fantastic human being who is rationally governed by the principle of increasing total utility and decreasing marginal utility. And this fantastic being, happens to be given a plate of G and it is useful to him. They give him 500 and he continues to be useful. His total utility continues to grow and his marginal utility is decreasing: the last dish is *less useful to him* . And there's no way to determine how much less useful it is. It is determined that I choose in the capitalist mode of production linked to the use value and the price it has, which deviated from its value, but this does not determine either price or value. The price is determined by the quantity of SNALdPaI which society in the total mass of that labour applies to the production of one kind of commodity or another.

And marginal utility is a fantasy, excuse me. It is a construction that goes so far as to say: value is not an interpersonal relationship, but an *intrapersonal one*, of each person with respect to things. And so, any attempt to operate directly with respect to how the product of society is appropriated, threatens the well-being of society, because the optimum of well-being (theoretical product of a socialist named Pareto) is that no one can improve his total well-being without diminishing the total well-being of another individual. If one individual has more things at the expense of another, the total well-being of one improved and the other worsened, and according to the optimal approach, social well-being worsened. This means that if there is a society, let's suppose, made up of 2 individuals, it does not matter where they got the product, if one has 99.99% of the product of social labor, and the other 0.01, any action that makes the one who has 0.01 go to have 0.02, and the other to 99.98, deteriorates social welfare. This is the content of neoclassical economics. Neoclassical economics has the Edgeworth box[73] as a graphic expression of the Pareto optimum.

[73] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caja_de_Edgeworth

One last thing that Marx does not develop at this point, there is only an indirect reference, nor am I going to develop it, but I say: what is it that cannot be put here? It is how the mechanism by which normality is imposed is set in motion. Marx is going to say: value is going to impose itself as an average through this permanent deviation. But why is it imposed and why does the development of the concrete form not appear? It is going to be imposed because when there is a surplus of a commodity, production will contract because it is sold below value, and vice versa when there is a shortage: production will increase. This implies movements in the scale of production. One received less than what would allow it to maintain the exceeded scale it had and another expands the scale. But the general form of this movement will be developed in Volume 3, and that is competition, which he will not outline until the chapter on relative surplus value. Why is it not possible to develop it at this point?

It contrasts with the development of Adam Smith, who looks at simple producers of commodities and immediately says: the production of this increases if it is lacking and vice versa, there will be more who want to produce what was lacking, etc. If we look at the producers of commodities who work fully individually, do work done privately and independently, the one who produces *G* cannot start producing s because there is too much *G* and there is a lack *of S.* To try to explain the mechanism of how normality is realized here would be to force an abstract movement. It is stated: one grows, the other decreases. But it is not possible to display how this movement is governed in practice.

And I clarify [it is repeated with respect to previous sessions]: what one is going to find in societies where figures appear that resemble that of the simple producers of commodities, the unity between production and consumption, even if it has commodity exchange, is directly governed under different forms. Marx will later appeal to the free artisan and peasant of feudal society as exponents of the producer who works privately and independently, private owner of his means of production. When one looks at these subjects in their concrete development, the unit is governed by the guild, bonds that have the character of being personal and direct. Indirect unity in these conditions is very difficult to realize, because the movement it requires is blocked because each one has the means of production that serve to produce what he was producing, it cannot be passed from one branch of production to the other.

[III]

When I look at this question of unity and the indirect way of establishing oneself, I emphasize the character of the relationship between the owners of commodities whom we have already seen as personifications of their commodities. Marx does not stop at unfolding this question and I do not know if it makes sense for a workshop like this to dwell on that now. If a situation arises where it is necessary to clarify the specific form between holders of commodities [Spoiler: we will do it].

Up to this point we have that indirect unity was realized, what enters into that unity is only that which is recognized as a product of socially useful labor as long as

there has been a change of form C-M [1st metamorphosis], if there is not, it is because what tried to enter circulation has no value, it does not have the attribute of changeability because it is not the product of a SNALdPaI, and it will have disappeared from the movement. One has to be careful here, because when one looks at the realized unity, it has the appearance of a direct unity, because what remains is what has been recognized as value, but one does not see that there are things that wanted to be commodities produced privately and independently and that are socially useless, have no social use value and do not enter into this exchange relation. So, they are nowhere to be found when one looks at unity, they are left out.

This lends itself to reversals of believing that value can be determined by unity and it is the other way around: unity is established through value. It is a way of organizing social production that produces things that wanted to be social use values and were not. And this is what Marx is going to follow when he states that, through this movement of commodities, what appears is the unity of the process of social metabolism in which labor is done privately and independently, and consequently the different owners of the commodities who enter into social relations in this process face their own social relation as something that is separate from their own social relations. persons, and that their persons are subject to dependence on things. Now we are seeing how what we knew in production is taking shape in circulation.

Marx says: what we want to look at is what this unity tells us. We already know that commodities are not necessarily exchanged in proportions that correspond to their value, they can be sold above or below value, but they enter the exchange with the attribute of exchangeability, placed in them in the production process. And what we are going to look at is what the unfolding of this process of metamorphosis, of change of form, is telling us. Marx makes an analysis of the movement by looking: there is one who sold the commodity, and the other gave the gold in exchange. What movement is left of this? Commodities were exchanged for money (the general form of value), and money, gold, was exchanged for a special form of what is the use value of money, which is used to buy any commodity whatever its use value. The commodity ceased to have its primitive form when it changed hands and now has the shape of gold. And if before one had seen the price of commodities as an ideal measure of value, now we have that the body of the commodity was effectively transformed into gold. What appears is a double process in which this unity is realized. It is a sale from the point of view of the possessor of the commodity, it is a purchase from the point of view of the buyer, and it will appear that every sale is at the same time a purchase.

In order for commodities to be able to carry out this first step in their metamorphosis, they have to encounter gold as a form of money. The question is: where does gold enter this process? From its source of production. The possessor of gold never sells because what he brings into circulation is the one recognized as the general representative of value. He exchanges it as if it were the immediate product of his labor for products of other forms of labor that contain the same amount of value. Gold is never sold, with it what is done is to buy. When one sees the gold that entered through the point of production, from that movement that

makes of buying, that gold always expresses the already *realized prices* of commodities, because it is always confirming that another commodity with a certain use value is recognized as the bearer of social labor.

One looks at the gold in its course and sees that it always passes from one hand to another as the realization of this first metamorphosis of the commodity (the sale). When any commodity is turned into gold—it was sold—the whole attribute of the use-value of that commodity is erased, and one looks at money and cannot know what forms the commodities that were sold for that money were. So, in the form of money, all commodities are qualitatively equal. Since every sale is a purchase, the 1st metamorphosis of any commodity into money, at the same time is always the 2nd metamorphosis of another commodity that was previously converted into money. So, you're going to go into this second metamorphosis. This is the other side of the 1st metamorphosis, everything we saw in the 1st now appears from the other side. Now this is M-C. Money is the absolutely alienable commodity, immediately exchangeable for any other. Money "reads backwards" the price of all commodities and expresses them all. Commodities have to prove that they are carriers of socially useful labor, money has nothing to prove, it is immediately exchangeable. That money is always expressing that it is the body that has taken a commodity that has already been sold, and at the same time what it does is express the possibility of buying any other commodity. And now it appears the other way around: the purchase is a sale. Each cycle of metamorphosis of a commodity, with the transformation M-C, is the opening of the cycle of another commodity with the transformation M-M.

There is going to be a difference which arises from the materiality of the process of exchange and which does not contain a difference of content with respect to that process, and that is that since the producers of commodities are specialized in the production of a certain commodity, they sell quantities of that single commodity, their metamorphosis implies a mass of processes of sale. and at the same time, since it is sold to buy, the sale is a purchase of different use values. The final metamorphosis of one commodity encompasses a set of initial metamorphoses of others. I come with the money to buy and buy a variety of commodity, which begins the process of metamorphosis of that variety. The initial metamorphosis is of a limited variety of commodities by the commodity owner being sold to a diversity of buyers, and one buying from a variety of sellers.

[Ignacio asks about the "added value" of which political economy speaks.]

That term is born from an inversion, it appears as if it is added to something that is inert. The image is: there is a mass of pre-existing inert value (means of production) to which new value is added that sprang from living labor. And in the process of the organization of social production and consumption the question is the other way around: living labor is organized for which it must be provided with means of production. The term "added value" is inverted in this sense. When we come to the capital cycle we will see why it appears like this, and how the labor that was invested in the means of production reappears in the value of the product. But in production what was generated is new value = how living labour was assigned to the different concrete useful forms. If I am going to look at it by its

content, "added value" is what we have been looking at so far as the generation of value. The value of the means of production reappears in the value of the product because it is necessary to recognize whether the one who bought the means of production to perform the work recognized that this commodity contained value, and now transformed into the product, needs to be recognized again as socially useful, because it may be that transformed as it is, it is socially useless. The problem is for those who recognized it as socially useful because they gave money in exchange and now find that not only did their work not create value, but that the value of the means of production is not even preserved.

In circulation there is no addition of value, what there is is realization, but it may happen that it is not realized in full or in excess, but that entered into social consumption; and when it was done in excess, someone put in more work than is locked into the commodity and vice versa, someone is getting more product for less work. In circulation there is never a generation of value. Any movement of circulation that causes a commodity to be sold above or below value, that value either went elsewhere or came from somewhere else, but there is no new generation. The term "value added" works a lot in tax legislation, where strictly speaking, the value added tax, beyond the appearances that make it seem that value arises from trade, it is implicitly recognized that value arises in production, which is seen as trade as if it were part of production.

I objected to the use of the term because it is imposing, I do not think that there is any proposal of economic theory as such, as the foundation of something, that uses the term as something that is what is generated. VAT[74] falls on the value that was generated in an activity, with this caveat that it also appears in commercial movements where there is no generation, but appropriation of value. We are looking at the same thing in this development. To what extent is the term "added value" not seen as something different from what we are proposing? To calculate the added value, the input-output matrix is made, how many means of production must be used for each production process, the means of production are subtracted from the value of the product. Well done, the value of the means of production consumed during its useful life (machinery, etc.) must be subtracted, and what remains is the product, and that is what is called "value product", and on this is considered that the value added tax falls. It is being recognized as the new value product.

Marx, at the end of Volume 3, has an argument with Smith because he confuses the product of value with the value of the product. The value of the product is the total of socially necessary abstract labor that was expended directly *and indirectly* to produce a commodity: what was expended on its immediate production + what was spent on the production of its means of production. The product of value is the new value created, the "value added". It is almost a question of nomenclature. Tax experts can only look at it as means of production being bought for *this reason* and the product being sold for *that purpose*, and the difference is the value added. And whether that came from work or any other source is indifferent to them.

[74] Value Added/Added Tax.

Marx makes an observation about the personification condition of this antithetical movement in the owners of commodities. One has the figure of a buyer and the other of a seller. In both movements there are commodities and money. The same subject goes from fulfilling the role of seller to that of buyer. The circulation of commodities takes shape in the transformation of what the person who personifies them does, which always starts as a seller (except for the producer of gold) and ends as a buyer. The other antagonistic character of this movement is that in the 1st metamorphosis, the commodity is a non-use-value for its possessor, for the seller, and vice versa: when the movement ends in the 2nd step of the cycle of metamorphosis, the commodity is a use-value for its possessor. Every metamorphosing movement of one commodity contains the opposing metamorphosis of two other commodities. The unity of this whole movement of metamorphosis is the circulation of commodities. In order for one to sell one's commodity and make the first metamorphosing move, one's buyer must have sold a different commodity in order to have the money with which he is going to pay him. And then the seller becomes a buyer and is going to operate in the metamorphosis of what he is going to buy. Here the unity of the process of social metabolism is revealed. What is going to happen with all this? There is a substantial difference between the circulation of commodities and the direct exchange of products (M-C).

Here what we have is $\mathbf{10G \rightarrow M \rightarrow 1S}$, without there ever being a change in which the *G* become directly S. There is always the mediation of money. Here the power of the process of commodity circulation is manifested. It can overcome any limitation that has to do with personal ties because as it is an objectified social bond it is independent of people; Since the two poles of metamorphosis are independent of each other, it can be spread spatially (the commodities of the two poles of the process can be anywhere) and it becomes clear that the unity of this process of social metabolism escapes the possibility of direct control by the people involved in it. What will appear from this potentiality of the independence of the opening and closing movement is the possibility that even though every purchase is a sale and vice versa, the unit will not be closed.

Commodities enter this circulation, they are transformed into money, one takes the place of the other, they go into the sphere of consumption, and money always appears in the hands of the last one who sold and has not yet bought. It will then appear that although every buyer then acts as a seller, etc., in the middle there is an interruption where the commodity has been transformed into money and is still waiting to be transformed again into a commodity of different use value. It may happen that in that interruption one may have sold and not bought. Here there is a sale that involves a purchase but that is not followed by the 2nd metamorphosis, by a new purchase. Marx is going to criticize Say's Law that since every purchase is a sale, every seller takes the commodities to his own buyer and then there can never be a situation in which there are commodities that contain value and cannot be sold, that do not have a buyer. Marx states that this is separated into the two poles, it is not barter (immediate unity). There may be a temporary interruption of the circulation of commodities, in which a sold commodity remains in the form of money. Because since unity is established indirectly, a commodity was missing and

cannot be bought: one has to wait for it to reach circulation, for the movement to be corrected, and then the individual retains the money while waiting to buy.

It may happen that an individual sells his commodities with a certain unit value, and has to sell a certain quantity of them in order to buy another one (he does not yet have enough money). And then, since here appears a phase and another phase of the cycle of metamorphosis that encloses an internal unity (it is sold to buy), but externally it is presented as on the one hand a sale and on the other a purchase, Marx is going to say: what is inside is a unity, but because of its way of being realized they are independent moments, That movement can be separated and the internal unity of these forms so that they correspond to their content (which is one), can only be established violently through a crisis.

And Marx is going to make the whole synthesis of development there by saying: all this is born from the fact that the commodity is the internal unity of opposed, antagonistic moments. It is use value and value, private labor that has to function as directly social labor (money represents social labor), it is concrete labor that is compared on the basis of its condition of abstract labor, there is a personification of things and a reification of people. Where do all these contradictions manifest themselves within commodities? In the movement of their circulation, of the metamorphosis of commodities. Its movement entails the *possibility* of a crisis, but for it to develop and be realized, a whole series of determinations are brought into play that have not yet appeared and that are not simply present in the process of circulation of *simple commodities.* In contrast to logical representation, the definition is the closure of development and not the starting point. He then defines money as the medium of circulation of commodities. It is after the unfolding of all the determinations of that function as a means of circulation. It is not: "Since money functions as a medium of circulation, then..." It is the other way around: as the process of metamorphosis is taking this form, we now recognize money in its function as a medium of circulation.

Javiera: The role of the crisis is not clear to me, if it has the function of giving unity to the process, it appeared suddenly and it was not clear to me.

JIC: Here there is an internal unity, the process of social metabolism. When one looks at the metamorphosis of the commodity, one sees that it is sold to buy. But when one sees that these two poles do not have an immediate link, but are mediated by the transformation C-M and M-M, it can happen that someone sells and does not buy. Then the movement of the unit was interrupted. Why can it be interrupted? If the social bond is direct and personal, unity is established immediately. Society disposes of this, it is allocated in such a way and what was produced is going to be consumed, etc. There is no such link here. How does this indirect unity manifest itself? Here use-value is at the same time a value-bearer. When value is looked at, it is the recognition of labour performed in various concrete forms as socially useful, but not through its immediate concrete forms, but through the determination of that labour as a mere expenditure of labour-power, as abstract labour. There is a recognition of the social character of labor, but it is carried as an attribute of the product of private labor that acts as an expression of the social character of labor. This is a social relationship between

people but it appears as a social relationship between things, and people appear subject to... how do they recognize themselves as individual organs of the process of social metabolism? Through things: the subject is inverted with respect to the object.

All this arises from the private character of social labor. This implies that there is no immediate unity, but that unity has to be realized, the content of all this is that the process of social metabolism reproduces itself, unity is present and *imposes itself*, it is not that the process of social metabolism goes anywhere. But since it does so in this way that encompasses all these contradictions, what is a unity inwardly, manifests itself as movements independent of each other (private labor, commodities that do not complete their cycle of metamorphosis because they remain in the form of money), and then that unity that is the reproduction of the process of social metabolism is reproduced through movements that are increasingly distant from that immediate reproduction. More and more money remains in the form of money and does not close with the purchase of the other commodity, but this is a unity, that of human life, which reproduces itself.

When it is falling apart, this unity is violently re-established in some way that is not the normal flow of unity, but that is inherent in that unity presenting itself as things independent of each other. And this is a crisis: instead of flowing under normal forms, it now takes an extraordinary form where unity is restored. But this is as if one were saying it... This is an attribute of this process because of the form it has, but it is inherent in any process that has an inner unity and that is performed by movements that are independent, it is not only the process of social metabolism when it is carried out privately and independently. I can't think of any way now, but... I'm going to try to take an example from nature (I don't know if I'm going to say nonsense).

The organic processes of a plant depend on conditions that the subject himself cannot control: temperature, rainfall... Normally that living subject is in an environment where these conditions balance and are what he needs for his life. But these are not directly regulated, and every now and then the restoration of normal temperature or humidity takes the form of a drought or a raging storm. The unity of the life process of this organism was restored: there was the drought and now it rained. This is typical of any process in which there is an inner unity but it is not immediate. So far there is nothing that leads him to systematically deviate to one side: it is a possibility, but for it to be carried out the determinations are not here. Something that is regulated indirectly but that has an inner unity always contains the possibility of a crisis.

Javiera: What I find confusing is the mention of the internal and the external: if there is nothing external to capital...

JIC: Here there is a content (process of social metabolism) that takes a form (the capitalist mode of production) that in turn becomes a content that has its concrete forms. I don't know if the example of thought and words is useful: thought is content, it has a unity. When expressed in words, there is a fairly direct regulation of words, but suppose I were choking when I said something. Then the flow in that

form that expresses the content entered into crisis. How does it have to be resolved? Until the suffocation passes, I can't continue talking. Now: my words have no other content than my thought. It's not that there's an outside. But the content itself gives it a form, that this form contains contradictions that are born of the content and are manifested. We are talking about the way in which a certain content is realized that is not immediately expressed as such, but as movements independent of each other, which in themselves do not have an immediate unity. The content itself has a unity, its forms do not. Then, there is the possibility that these forms begin to be antagonistic to each other to such an extent that the content needs to manifest itself by violently re-establishing the unity of these forms: a crisis.

I hesitate to set the example of things that come much later but perhaps it will only serve to set the example. Here we are looking at the reproduction of the process of social metabolism governed by the capitalist mode of production. By determinations that I will not substantiate so far but I will describe, the production of means of subsistence for the workers... Each individual capital needs to expand that production as if the social need for that production had no limit. The capitalist mode of production itself causes variable capital (what will manifest itself as the ability of the working class to purchase its means of subsistence) to grow with a specific limitation. So, with a production that is a part of the unit that needs to grow as if it had no limit, and a solvent social need that grows with a specific limit, they are going to be separated, and to a certain degree of separation it can appear compensated via sale-credit: since someone was able to buy on credit it was not noticed that it was separating, and they continue to separate... And there comes a time when the movement of the unity of capital can no longer be separated and a crisis of general overproduction appears, production cannot continue to expand as if it had no limits, the 2nd metamorphosis cannot be closed. But since it is an indirect unity, it cannot manifest itself immediately, but gradually, until it reaches the limit and has to be re-established by means of a crisis. This is what one faces in the simplest determination, which is why Marx says that this is the *possibility* of crisis, *not necessity* (so far).

There is nothing outside of that movement, but the forms it takes is as if they are becoming independent of something that by its very nature may have a degree of independence but cannot be indefinite, it has a term, which cannot be imposed either, such as: "let's slowly return to unity", because individual capitals have to continue expanding as if there were no limit. The general movement cannot say "we are going to restrict production" or "now we are going to increase the consumption of the workers to carry this out", because this consumption is governed by the movement of capital itself.

[To another question from Ignacio about countries in crisis while others are on the rise, he replies that he is not going to talk about *capitalist crises* until Volume 3].

Aristides: So it's a crisis of circulation. But you gave an example of a crisis of overproduction, or that it was the same... or how?

JIC: No, here what we have is an indirect unity that one of its normal forms is the crisis, because internally those forms with an independent and contradictory movement outwards, are a unity. So far there is the *possibility* that there will be a crisis.

Aristides: But crises can be of many kinds.

JIC: Nothing. This is the way in which unity is manifested indirectly. Indirect unity can flow, but because it is indirect it can not flow. The crisis is not the denial of indirect unity, but its affirmation, but now in a violent way, it does not flow as it has until now. It is not a crisis of circulation or production, but of this way in which unity is established.

Aristides: But it may have ways of manifesting itself in policies that...

JIC: But to something that exists only possibility, I cannot answer what forms it will take. For this possibility to be realized, a series of conditions must be met that are not there until now. What is the meaning of this? That when one is going to move forward and see the concrete forms that this is going to take, one is going to see: is the crisis born from this concrete thing that I have here? No, the possibility is already at the starting point. When I have to ask myself about a specific crisis, I don't have to start the explanation by saying: because this happened here politically, the crisis happened. If not: here is the possibility, what conditions have to be met for a crisis to break out? The crisis springs from normal movement, it cannot come from outside (because there is none). So I'm going to go back to the immediate concrete form and I'm going to say: that's why it takes the form of a political crisis.

If I do not know that this possibility is at the starting point of the general social process, then I have the problem that, for example, for neoclassical political economy the possibility of a crisis is not present: it has to come from an imperfection external to the mechanism, in the mechanism there can never be a crisis. Say's law says: every seller brings his buyer to market. And when the crisis comes, he says: this happens because someone made a mistake and acted irrationally, or because there was an external disturbance, this bad guy came and unbalanced things, or wanted to intervene in this automatic equilibrium in which the maximum of social welfare is carried and spoiled it. And when one looks at this, he says: this automatic equilibrium contains in its simplest determination an indirect unity and therefore can only be realized indirectly.

It is clear that if I have to act politically in the face of the political crisis, the possibility is of no use to me as an explanation, that the commodity is such and such, without explaining anything about the political crisis, to which we wanted to answer each other in the first meeting. But the problem is that if he cuts short the question of the necessity of the concrete forms of political action and stops at an appearance, then his knowledge, therefore the organization of his action is sustained by that appearance. If you came to the simplest determination and when you come back you say: I know what I have to do politically. What he did was to build an abstraction and instead of continuing to advance to the concrete in this

case he remained in an abstraction. All this that we are looking at has concrete forms that are the opposite of what we are looking at because they contain these contradictions, but we will only be able to answer the need for concrete forms if we continue to accompany the development, the deployment of the simplest forms to the most concrete.

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b) *The course of money*

At this point where Marx synthesized money in its function as a medium of circulation, he is going to look at what happens to the movement of money: the course of money. Marx takes up what he had been developing with respect to how indirectly (not directly, as in M-C) this process of metamorphosis appears, which has as its starting point that there is value, that there is a commodity, and it is going to unfold by returning to the form of commodities. And he is going to argue that the movement of the M-form is cyclical, but the fact that it is implies that the movement of money cannot be cyclical: it is moving further and further away from the point at which it entered, money is a diversity of commodities realized. It can never go back to the starting point, it flows. Here again a question arises of who is the active and the passive subject: it is the commodities that make the money move when it changes hands. Therefore, the course of money reflects the movement of commodities.

The content of what determines whom, is going to appear inverted, that the course of money makes commodities move. And Marx is going to unfold how this inversion is developing and he says: money is always on the buyer's side. It acts as a means of purchase, it realizes the price of the commodities. As he did it, it appears that the commodity passes from the hands of the seller to those of the buyer; At the same time, money makes the opposite movement, but once it has done so it repeats the movement it made before: while the commodity leaves circulation, money constantly remains in circulation and repeats its buying movement. Since it is the one that appears to recognize in use-values the character of commodities (so to speak), it appears as if springing from this recognition that money makes of them. Since money is in circulation all the time, it seems that all the movement was on the side of money. And we are going to have this first determination in which the metamorphosis of commodities is going to appear as those that are not able to move by themselves and money as that which makes them pass from one hand to another. Marx closes by saying: money reflects the circulation of commodities, but when one looks at it, it seems that money is the one that circulates commodities, as a medium of circulation.

Here this paper is going to begin to have a concrete form because it is materially, the same physical piece of money, the one that is passed from one hand to the other: it is not simply that one is looking at money as such. Now the concrete form that the course of money takes is that the same piece of money is the one that changes hands, moving in the opposite direction. In the movement of money, the interweaving of all metamorphoses, of the "world of commodities", will then be reflected. This commodity entered circulation, went into the sphere of

consumption, and behind comes another specimen of this same commodity because the process of production is restarted. All of them are renewed and are entering and leaving circulation. Money as a medium of circulation lives within circulation. Faced with this situation, the question of a quantitative determination arises. If money is always in circulation, how much money fits in circulation? It is a problem of measurement. A series of variables are going to be related. The dependent variable is how much money fits in circulation, and we're going to look at what the independent variables are, what determines this amount.

The first thing to define is a space where circulation occurs. Marx refers to a country, he makes this formal cut, but there is no need to why that cut has been proposed so far. Here there is a national scope, a gold that has a monetary name. That monetary name is governed directly, it has universal validity within the corresponding scope (which here is cut out as a country). And we have a second cut: we have a certain period in which we are going to ask ourselves about the amount of money: it is not the same if I take the daily amount, as the amount of money that fits in a month. Marx is going to say: every day there is a simultaneous multiplicity of metamorphoses of commodities into money (simple sales), and on the other hand simple purchases. One has to make a temporary cut, and in this period of time this mass of sales occurs.

What is the first independent variable that will appear here? Once the period of time and the scope of circulation to be taken have been defined, here a certain mass of value has to be realized, which has to be transformed from the given commodity form into money. The first determination that is going to play here is how much value has to be converted into money through sale and how much value into commodities through purchase. Marx will note that we are looking at the unity of this movement, and therefore the two sums are equal. The synthetic answer is: the mass of value that must be circulated. In what is the value of commodities expressed? Never in quantities of labor, but of gold. But gold can measure the value of commodities because it itself has value, and since it has value, it depends on the productivity of the labor that produces it. What about the value of gold? The price of all commodities will rise if the value of gold expressed in a quantity falls, and conversely, if the value of gold rises, the price of all commodities will fall. It depends on how much gold is needed depending on the value of each unit of gold (I add: *monetary unit*).

Marx goes on to clarify that this is not a problem of money as a medium of circulation, but as a *measure of value.* The mass of value to be circulated is already given, but the *expression* in gold depends on the value of each unit of gold. To ask how much gold it is worth, the first analytical step is to say: let's consider that the value of 1 unit of gold, which is given, does not change. Marx is going to dwell at this point on questions of whether the value of gold changes, whether silver is used instead of gold, how the change in value of a pound of gold (with a monetary name) becomes apparent, how the new gold already comes with its value modified by the productivity of labor, and then the old gold, as it moves, adjusts to that new value... All these are expressions of that movement.

He is going to make an observation about the gold and silver mines, in particular those of America (Potosí). He says that all this must be taken into account but we are going to consider that gold has a given value. And then 1 pound of gold as a unit of expression of the value of commodities, having a given value, the value of all commodities is related in different proportions to this pound according to the value contained in the different commodities and that contained in the pound. The mass of value to be circulated, then, depends on the sum of the prices of the commodities to be realized, sold, and bought. Let us consider that the productivity of the labour produced by each commodity is also given and that there is a mass of these commodities whose price depends on the mass of commodities in circulation. If one does it to simplify... It can also be too much or too little with respect to normality. But let us suppose that these prices of commodities are immediately an expression of their value. Now he is going to propose that we look at the other side: that of the movement of money, and what aspect of that movement we have to look at.

We saw that there is a succession of metamorphosis of money into which it is transformed, C-M and M-C, which in turn implies that there is again a transformation of C-M that now takes the form of another commodity, etc. Gold coins (money in the form of monetary units) are involved in this movement. The question is: how many times does the same unit of gold pass from one hand to another? How long does it take for each part to be used again? And the inverse of that time is the velocity of circulation of money. To put it in simple terms: if all the sales were successive – there were none simultaneous with another: first there is one, then another... – and each one always with the same value, it is enough to have an amount of money that corresponds to the first sale, because then it is that same piece of money that one used to buy the next one, that he sold him, that he uses the same piece to buy someone else... And with a single piece of money the whole circulation of commodities took place.

The polar opposite would be for all the sales to be simultaneous, and since all buyers sell at that very moment, they do not have the money to buy because they have not yet sold: there needs to be an amount of money in circulation that is equivalent to the total mass of value that has to be realized, because each one has to come with the money with which he is going to buy: Since you do not have a previous sale, but you are going to sell at the same time you are buying, in order to buy you need to have the money in your pocket. In one case, a single piece works for the entire movement, in the other all the parts work only once, a mass of parts that corresponds to the total value of the commodities will be needed. So, how many parts are needed? It depends on how many times each piece is used in the period we are taking as a unit to make the measurement. Then Marx goes on to put: the amount of money that fits into circulation is determined by the sum of the prices of commodities and the number of times *each coin* is used in circulation, its number of rotations in the period in which it is taken.

Javiera: I have doubts about the establishment of the number of rotations, if it takes a day or...

JIC: Central banks make a calculation of what the speed of turnover of money is, which is done on the same basis that we are looking at here. It is not arbitrary, it depends on the concrete conditions of circulation. If for some reason transactions can be chained, the velocity of money circulation is higher because each unit is going to be used more times. If it cannot be done and they have to be put together, the speed of circulation of money will be lower, the same coins will be able to be used fewer times. The quantity of money is inversely proportional to the velocity of circulation: the faster it is, the fewer units of money are needed to move the same mass of value. It depends on the specific movements. It must be taken into account that credit has not yet appeared here, that there is a purchase and sale that is not closed with a transfer of hands of money from one to the other.

[II]

[...] The number of coin-named gold units that enter circulation depends on the mass of value contained in each of these units. The measure of value affects the medium of circulation. So, we have the mass of the value of the commodities that are going to change hands and against that total mass of value, the unit value of gold implies that more or less units of gold are needed. Marx says: gold enters circulation as a product of the labor that produces it, and if the productivity of that labor changes, the difference in value that it implies because the productivity of labor has changed is *gradually* transmitted to the old gold that is in the process of circulation. But for what we want to look at it does not matter how it is recognized—whether it becomes clear whether gold expresses more or less value—but what we are going to consider is that gold has its value determining. When the value of gold changes and has the effect that is reflected – whether more or less units of gold are needed depending on how the value of each unit rose or fell – it affects the value of the units that are already in circulation.

I make an observation, although this has a much later development. We said that it is the abstract labor socially necessary to produce a commodity that determines its value. What is this "producing"? It is not that the commodity was produced a while ago and is in circulation and that is what determines the value. Marx, later on, when he begins to look at how changes in the productivity of labour are governed by the attribute of capital, he will pose the question by saying: it is not the labour that is expended in producing it, but the labour that is expended in *reproducing it*: the present labour. If there is a machine from 5 years ago, and today the productivity of the labor that produces it has developed, the value of the machine is the amount of SNALdPaI it requires today. But it is not reproduction in the abstract, but that which is in a position to put the commodity into circulation today. If I have to wait 6 months for the commodity that is the product of a greater productivity to reach circulation, and now it is the one that governs the value of those commodities, and the old ones that were already produced will have decreased in value, until that other one cannot enter, the value of those commodities will not be affected.

Later we will see in detail that the only thing that can affect the perspective that there is going to be a commodity that is going to have more or less V[75], what is going to happen until that commodity is in a condition to reach circulation and consumption, is not a change in value but a deviation in price as long as consumption can be brought forward or delayed and, consequently, demand grows or shrinks and this process of the commodity being sold above or below its value operates. It is not that the value has changed, because replacing it will cost more or less, but until that reaches circulation, the value of the commodity is determined by the one that can effectively supply consumption [...].

If up to this point it was: 1a = 2 *ounces of gold*, and now gold in general has doubled the productivity of labor but it enters gradually with respect to old gold, what is going to happen is that at some point a change from 1*to* = 3 *gold will appear*, until it is established that 1a = 4 *gold*. It is simply the development of movement. It is a deployment that is outside the explanation that is being developed, because then Marx is going to eliminate that movement and he is going to say: at a given moment the gold that is in circulation has a value, and we are going to consider that this value is fixed. So it's an observation about a form, not about the content you're trying to deploy. It is this, it has no more substance. But since here there is a term that value is determined by the productivity that is coming in, and consequently it does not appear as the amount of labor that was applied in the production of the mass of gold that is in circulation, but appears as the amount that it cost to reproduce that gold, I made the clarification. Later we will see the question involved in the work of reproducing that commodity, but which implies that it is in present condition. The term "reproduction" is to produce them again under the present conditions.

[…] Marx said that we are going to take gold and we are going to assume that the productivity of the labor that produces gold and other commodities does not fluctuate because that would also change its price even if nothing has happened to the productivity of the labor that produces gold. As in any measurement process, one needs to define the conditions under which the measurement is made. What Marx is going to look at is the problem of the value of gold. What we had is this determination that the number of coin-named units of gold that are going to go into circulation depends not only on the total value that has to be circulated, but also on the unit value, the value of each unit of gold. If the total mass of value is given, the number of gold units will depend on how much value is relatively contained in each gold unit. I had skipped it, but Marx here makes a reference to something that it would be premature to answer:

> A one-sided appraisal of the events which followed the discoveries of the new gold and silver mines led in the seventeenth, and especially in the eighteenth, to the misleading conclusion that commodity prices had risen because more gold and silver had been brought to market as a medium of circulation.[76]

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[75] **JIC:** And this is typical of agricultural production, because it is not known what the productivity of labor will be as it is subject to natural conditioning, but it is possible to predict whether the productivity of labor has risen or has fallen, it will contain more or less value.

[76] Marx, K. (1977: 77), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

It is not a problem of quantity, but of what happens to the unit value of gold. We have the mass of prices that have to be realized. It is implicit that if it is expressed in quantities of gold, that depends on the value of the commodities and each unit of gold, and the other element that is going to play in this movement is going to be what happens to each piece of gold in circulation. The problem is: if the changes of hands of the commodities have a successive character (they occur one after the other), someone sold, received a piece of gold from its buyer, and now he is going to buy. And he gives the seller of what he is going to buy the same piece of gold that he received. But that second seller with the same piece of gold goes and buys: a second movement of that mass of value that has to be moved is made. And if the one who received that piece of gold uses it to buy, the same piece was used a third time (all this within the period of time that is taken as a unit). If that piece of gold was used three times, then the mass of gold pieces that corresponded to the mass of the value of the commodities according to the value of each piece of gold is not necessary; If all the pieces that enter the movement move three times, it will take $^1/_3$ of the amount of gold pieces, because the same gold coin will move several times.

And this, which is the inverse of how long it takes each piece of gold to change hands within the period that is being taken, is what Marx is going to call the "velocity of circulation of money". The higher it is, the faster that same piece passes from one hand to the other, and conversely, it was retained longer. If all transactions were successive, then one has (and this is an absolute abstraction) is that with a single piece of gold an enormously large mass of value could have been moved because a lot of transactions have been made with it. On the contrary: if all transactions were simultaneous—that at the very moment I bring my commodities to sell, I am buying—since I have not yet sold my commodity, I have to have in my pocket the amount of money necessary to pay my seller. So each piece of gold only circulates 1 time in the period. It would be the other extreme case where the velocity of circulation of money would be equal to unity. In the first case, that of all transactions, it would tend to infinity.

Here it plays, in the average of all the pieces of money that are in circulation, how many times each of them moved in the period under consideration (that gives its velocity of circulation), and that goes into the determination of how many units of money are going to be necessary. Marx is going to synthesize it in the formula[77]:

$$\frac{\textbf{Sum of commodity prices}}{\textbf{Number of rotations of the representative coins of equal value}} = \textbf{mass of money that functions as a means of circulation}$$

That will give how many units of money are needed or moved within circulation.

[…] When the crisis occurs because the process of metamorphosis of the commodity has been interrupted, it is not a question that it cannot be sold because there is a lack of money in circulation, but the other way around, because

[77] Formula taken from Marx, K. (1977: 79) *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE. Modified in terms of its shape so that it appears on a single line and improves its readability.

something hindered the fluidity of the cycle of metamorphosis. So we have this determination.

Here Marx is going to make the observation that the total sum of the price of commodities has a double component: it depends on the material mass, on the quantity of commodities in circulation, and on the price that corresponds to each of these commodities. Then there are all kinds of movements that can occur, either because there has been a movement in the velocity of circulation of money, or in the unit prices of commodities, in the masses of the various commodities which are thrown into circulation. That all this can be moved in different ways and affect the sum total of the prices of commodities, and the quantity of units of money necessary as means of circulation for all that movement. The conclusion is going to be: a certain amount of money fits, subject to fluctuations, but what you are going to observe is... And here concrete determinations appear: production crises and commercial crises, which so far there are no determinations that lead to these crises. And he goes on to conclude: in every country there is a certain relatively stable amount of gold that functions as a medium of circulation.

Again, there is an observation saying: it is not the quantity of gold that is in circulation that makes commodity prices fluctuate. The amount of gold in circulation depends on the price of the commodities and the value of each unit of money. Commodities enter circulation without price and money without value, it is a problem of proportional quantities between piles of gold and commodities in which two masses without common substance are equal. When we looked at Rubin's proposals within Marxist political economy, those that reduce value to form, money appeared as the one that gives value to the mass of commodities that enter into the exchange relationship with it. And underlying these proposals is the image that commodities enter the exchange not only not having a price but without having value, and that it is given to them by money, whose value was never explained. Later we will also see some proposals on the determination of the magnitude of the value of money. Marx is going to propose: the mass of money that is going to enter when gold circulates is the *dependent* variable. Prices do not depend on the amount of money in circulation, but the other way around. Consequently, a *certain amount* of gold fits into circulation, neither more nor less, in the movement of normality. We will see later what role this development plays.

c) *Currency. The sign of value*.

From this function of money as a medium of circulation arises its form of *currency*. It is a quantity of gold, which when one looks at it as a price is an imaginary, ideal quantity, but which in the movement of exchange has *to really* confront commodities, which has a monetary name and which, in the synthesis of all these determinations, [does it "work"?[78]] as currency. Now the determinations of money as currency are going to begin to unfold.

[78] The recording is cut off for one second.

What is going to appear is something that we had seen when we asked ourselves about the function of the price standard, which has to be the establishment of a scale of measurement of quantities of gold that have to have a name, which is presented as external to the movement of commodities and gold (not so the value of gold, which can act as a measure of value because *it has* value). The concrete way in which this is going to happen is the minting of the currency, which corresponds to the embodiment of the structure of the price standard. This corresponds to the state, which appears here without the deployment of its determinations, it simply springs from this immediate analysis. The state is a direct social relation which has to operate as a form of movement, of the indirect social relation, of the process of social metabolism.

Marx is also going to do something that appears as an immediate cut-out by saying: the gold and silver that are minted as coins have national names, they correspond to internal circulation orbits of countries. And what he is going to propose is: just as commodities circulate within these national orbits, there is a general circulation of commodities that is the world market. In it, gold and silver "are stripped of their national uniforms" and what they show is that there is a cut in national areas of circulation and there is a general scope.

I make this clarification: when Marx speaks of the movement of D-gold in the world market, he is going to contrast it with the movements in national spaces by saying: in the world market money has no monetary name because there is no state that encompasses the space of the world market, and it circulates in the form of gold in bars or ingots without a name. There is a movement between the general and the national spheres that are mediated because the gold to go from the national to the generic level goes through the smelting, and when it returns from the world market to the national market it goes through the mintage. When we go on we will see that Marx considers that money on the world market is in the purity of its expression, and he is going to consider that gold circulates in the world market in its simple materiality, without a name. And we are facing a world market where gold has not circulated for years, and we are going to have to answer that.

What Marx begins to look at is: what happens to the gold-coins in the process of circulation? When we looked at why gold is not money "by nature" but money is gold "by nature", we saw that the commodity that is going to function as money has to put its body at the pole of the equivalent, and the other commodities are going to express their value in their body, which has to have certain attributes such as that it will not deteriorate in contact with the environment because it would lose substance of value. such as precious metals. But no matter how resistant they are, they wear out. Then the name of that gold coin as such a coin and the gold substance it contains begin to separate. So there are gold coins that have a name that corresponds to the amount of gold that they contained in their origin and that no longer contain it. There is a name/substance of value divorce movement that some suffer more, others less.

I use the pound a lot because it is at the same time a monetary name (£) and a unit of weight (lb). All monetary names come from the expression of quantity of weight. Weights were a quantity in another era of a certain expression of

something heavy on a scale. But if one today speaks of "weight" as a measure of the materiality of the body of something, it makes no sense. The pound has retained this identity and is therefore easier to express itself. What is going to start happening? There is a coin called "£1" (let's assume it is all gold), and on the scales it no longer weighs 1 pound. There begins to be this divorce and it will turn out that one is giving up a certain amount of value and receives in return something that has the name of that amount of value but does not have the substance of value. So the question that is going to arise is this separation between what is the law in the sense of the real content and what is the nominal law that the currency has.

The possibility then arises that gold will be replaced by simple symbols, objects that represent, that have a monetary name even if they do not contain the amount of substance of value that corresponds to that name. Marx is going to give several references to different movements of this, to the need to fragment the amount of value that is represented in a... which corresponds to an amount of gold that, instead of using that fragment of gold, is simply replaced by a coin that has the name but does not have gold, which historically were copper coins. And the monetary name is separated from the substance of value. Gold was replaced by these metals of lesser value and, finally, by *paper money*, signs of value. He clarifies that here he is not yet talking about D-credit, but about paper money issued by the state, the possibility of which arises from the function of money as a means of circulation. D-credit has its origin in another function of money as a means of payment that will appear below.

This is going to appear that I did not develop before, which is what Marx is going to refer to as the "process of counterfeiting money by princes", which comes from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. The prince, the incipient form of the state, goes into debt. He is the one who takes care of the melting and minting, but receives the coins and spends them. When the time comes to pay, he orders that all the coins in circulation have to be collected and go to the smelter. He remelts them with the same name but with less gold in each one, thus producing a larger number of coins. He returns to each one the amount of coins he gave for the foundry, and he has leftovers, and with those that are left over he pays his creditors.

Marx goes on to state that this is the struggle between the royal creditors (of royalty) and the royal debtors, who were the ones who ended up triumphing. Creditors hand over a certain amount of gold put on the scales (no matter how many coins there were), and demand that the same amount of gold be returned to them. And the prince's answer is: you gave a number of coins that have a name on them, and what was returned to you is the number of coins that have that name. Then there is this divorce between the quantity of gold and the name of the coins, which has a central role in this process of substitution by signs of value, in particular paper money. Saving the distances, one can remember an Argentine president who said: to the one who put dollars we are going to return dollars... And then they returned pesos. It is a process of "counterfeiting princes' money" in these concrete forms.

What appears is the question of what... Gold enters circulation through the gold producers, but the signs of value are put into circulation externally by the state

apart from the movement in circulation. Marx states that now the same question that was asked about how much gold fits into circulation, now is what happens to these signs of value that enter externally into circulation, and that can be added in a quantity that is independent of what circulation requires.

I swallowed a question before. Why are gold coins still accepted that no longer have the substance of value that corresponds to the monetary name? Every seller is willing to accept it, it is known that in the £1 coin there is not 1 lb of gold, on condition that when he goes to buy it is accepted as 1lb of gold. As long as this content/name divorce is accepted in circulation, it does not matter to the owners of commodities who want money for circulation. But there comes a point when it separates so much that then it doesn't start to matter. So there is a whole process of regulating when the currency can no longer be accepted by its name because there is a big enough difference between substance and name.

Banknotes have no substance of value, they are the product of a quantity of work that has nothing to do with their name. This condition that when one looks at it with gold there is a certain degree of tolerable divorce and after a certain degree it is no longer tolerable, here from the outset there is not, divorce is absolute. The condition for substituting signs of value for gold is that these signs must be forced to take place: that the individual who has to receive the money cannot refuse to receive these signs of value as money. Very old, on the banknotes of Argentina there was a legend that said "De curso legal": the law says that they have a course, that they have to be accepted. This corresponds to a circulation within a national space, where money appears to have a name and the capacity of circulation of the sign in this we are looking at cannot transcend the national space of the state that issued the sign.

Gabriel: When I talk about gold, I think of these proposals by liberals to return to the gold standard. What implications would this have from this side?

JIC: That is very complex. We need to look first at what happened to the amount of money, of signs of value that fit in circulation. We have to differentiate the mechanism of what happens from the reasons why the mechanism is set in motion. Unfortunately, at this point we are only going to look at the mechanism, not the reasons, with the elements we have we cannot advance on that. I understand that your concern, Gabriel, is more linked to the reasons why the mechanism is being set in motion, so we will not be able to stop.

The last section of this chapter is world money. When money goes into circulation on the world market, gold in its simplest form is needed, and this will be raised when it stops at world money. One is met with an absolute contrast of how money works today in the world market. And all the things that one sees under concrete forms are the opposite of what appeared here, which I simply enumerate: signs of value of money (not even coins) circulate, which are in themselves worthless, which have no forced tender and yet function in circulation. And phenomena appear whereby in national spaces where these signs of value do not have forced tender and the national sign does, there are transactions in which the national sign is not accepted, only the other one that circulates in the world

market despite the fact that it does not have forced tender, and there are transactions in which it seems absurd to use a sign from another national space and yet operations appear with them. There appears the treasure, whose modern form is the national treasures. For Marx the treasure can only be constituted in gold because it has value, the sign of value is only useful for circulation. National treasuries – except for a few – have no or little gold, they have signs of value and credit titles from other nation states, and in particular from the one that is the largest debtor in the world, and that does not really have the capacity to pay that debt. Therefore, these treasures are made up of promises of payment from a debtor who is absolutely insolvent, but at the same time has the possibility of paying by issuing sV, which can be done by anyone.

[Responding to Thomas] What the debit card does is establish that what belonged to so-and-so is now so-and-so's.

Tomás: Would Bitcoin be an accounting entry?

JIC: It has other determinations: it is not issued by the state, it is private money, it has accounting entries that have a certain complexity... But it is... Nothing, let's see what fate they have in the general movement. There they are not even forms of money, they do not come from the development of credit, but from movements of a speculative nature. But hey, we're not going to see Bitcoin.

[Answering another question] One of the reasons we stopped to look at the labor applied to the production of gold that is going to function as money—what was going on, even in the simplicity in which we look at it? Society applies a quantity of its total labour power in a concrete form which produces neither means of production nor means of subsistence. Thus, the substitution of gold for signs of value implies that the less the signs of value cost and the less need there is to replace them, the less labor power is wasted for what is not a use value for human life (although it is later wasted in other ways). From there appears what can push to replace gold with signs of value.

In the capitalist mode of production this has other determinations, but even in this simpler determination, it makes sense to substitute signs of value for gold from the point of view of the powers of the development of the productive forces of society, and of the simple reproduction of society, because it frees up labour which, otherwise, it must be applied without producing means of production or means of living. If society puts into operation 100 labor power and disposes of the product of 80 to reproduce its metabolism process, as unity is established indirectly, 10 were lost because social use-non-values were produced, and another 10 because they were applied to the production of gold. Then these movements appear. In a society where the general social relationship is carried by each one in his pocket, it has the form of a thing, it is not a personal attribute, every development of a speculative nature, of illusory movement, will have space. And Bitcoins have the double condition: they are speculative movements and have a purely apparent character.

[II]

We were looking at how much gold fits into circulation at a given time versus a mass of value that has to be moved in circulation, and the velocity of circulation of money. We had begun to see the possibility of the substitution of money for simple signs of value. We saw how the very movement of gold in circulation separates the real content of gold from the name it has in money, and which can nevertheless continue to circulate. Then there is the counterfeiting of money by princes, and finally a point at which all the gold in circulation can be substituted for papers, titles, signs representing value, to that gold. Since these signs have no value, the condition for their circulation was *forced tender*. [...] What I think we had not seen is what happens with the circulation of signs of value with respect to the circulation of gold.

With regard to gold, we had to fit a certain quantity because gold itself—it does not matter whether or not its name corresponds to the substance—contains a certain magnitude of value, which it cannot express by itself, but since it contains that magnitude, only this is possible. I don't remember if last time I expanded on a development that is not in Marx's text. Marx says: a certain amount fits because if there is too much gold in circulation the gold will be exchanged below its value, and gold is the expression of value. Gold does not need to confirm that it has value when it enters circulation. In these simple determinations that we are looking at (I was going to put it in these terms that are not the ones that correspond, but...) it makes no sense, when gold is left over, to try to exchange it for less than its value. That gold that is left over is going to be withdrawn from circulation and consequently it is going to be exchanged as money for its value. When there is a lack of gold, then gold will be exchanged above its value, and then it does make sense to pour into circulation that gold that was withdrawn, because it is being exchanged for the product of more socially necessary abstract labor than the one it contains. That is the regulation mechanism by which a quantity of gold fits. But the content of that mechanism is that gold has value. What about signs of value? In Marx's approach they are only useful for circulation. He clarifies, referring *only* to the D-symbol that corresponds to the function of a *medium of circulation*, not to the D-sign that is born from the function of money as *a means of payment*, which is something that will appear later.

What we're going to have is the question of how many value signs fit. Marx goes on to propose: while gold enters into circulation – as part of the movement of the exchange of commodities – through its production and does so directly, the signs of value enter *into circulation externally*, they are put into circulation by the state. Its input is independent of movement in circulation. What is going to appear next is: the state can put into circulation all the signs of value that it wants. They are only useful for circulation, therefore all those that are put will effectively enter circulation, but since there is a mass of value that is moving in circulation and the velocity of money is the same whether it is a sign of value or gold, when those additional signs of value beyond those necessary...

Here it is at stake that if the name of the sign is "1£" and what was circulating before was 1lb[79] of gold, when the number of banknotes with the name of 1£ exceeds the number of coins whose gold content was 1lb, as they still have to enter circulation, each of them will represent less value, because it is going to be absorbed into the circulation. The way in which each of them is going to represent less value is that the price of all commodities is going to rise. If banknotes continue to be added, as *they all* have to enter circulation, each one will represent a smaller portion of value and more banknotes will be needed to express the same magnitude of value as before, and the exchange value of commodities, their price in signs of value, will rise.

Marx says: if this goes on and on, all capacity of that sign to represent value is lost and it has to disappear from circulation. The experience, at least in Argentina [...] is that signs of value can continue to enter, that prices rise and rise, and the capacity of that sign to represent value is not lost: it continues to function as a means of circulation. Thus, the laws of circulation of signs of value are the opposite of the laws of the circulation of gold as money. A certain quantity of gold enters, all those that are put into circulation enter of signs of value.

I had mentioned to you last time the trout formulas[80] that I use to explain this contrast and we had not used them. But now I will allow myself to show what has changed in circulation with the signs of value with respect to gold.

Amount of monetary units that fit in circulation

Gold

$$q£_g = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(q_i \cdot v_{i_{£_g}})}{m}$$

This is the formula that Marx is going to put into *Capital*. It is an amount of money in gold ($_g$) that has a monetary name (£), and q corresponds to the amount [$q£_g$]. And he is simply going to put into play: the total mass of value that is in circulation results from adding up the different types of commodities that enter that circulation, the quantity of those commodities multiplied by the "price" (Marx is going to refer to the price, but in its purity it is the value [v_i] of each commodity expressed in quantities of gold, in this case of £, in money [$£_g$]), divided by the velocity of circulation of money (m).

The greater this mass of commodities, the greater the quantity of gold will have to be, the greater the velocity as well. But that quantity of gold is subject to the relation between the quantity of abstract socially necessary labour embodied in each commodity and that which is in each unit of gold. Something that does not fit into the formula but is implicit: if each unit of gold contains a larger magnitude of value, to express the value of each of these commodities a smaller quantity of gold

[79] Pound (unit of mass).
[80] Fraudulent, invalid.

is needed, and therefore this expression of the value of commodities in gold will be smaller. And vice versa, so more gold units would be needed. This is the genuine formula, which has this determination implicit.

Amount of monetary units that fit in circulation
Gold (invalid formula presented to make explicit the determination because gold cannot express the magnitude of its own value)

$$q£_g = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(q_i \cdot v_{i_{£_g}})}{1_{v_{£_g}} \cdot d}$$

This is the first invalid formula. But it serves to show that according to the magnitude of the value of each unit of gold, more or less units are needed, which bears a relation to the expression of the value of all the other commodities in that gold. It is invalid because no commodity, not even gold functioning as money, can express the magnitude of its own value. And here the value of gold expressed in quantities of gold would appear.

Amount of monetary units that fit in circulation
Gold (invalid formula presented to explain the determination,
because the value can never be expressed in amounts of labor)

$$q£ = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(q_i \cdot t_i)}{1t_g \cdot m}$$

This is the second invalid expression, because I substituted value for "socially necessary abstract labor" that was expended in producing each commodity, and that which is locked up in 1 unit of gold. It is invalid because value is quantities of labor *but is never expressed as quantities of labor*. This is going to play a role when one looks at the substitution of gold for signs of value. Why does this happen? I am going to take it in this invalid expression. The dependent variable or unknown I have in this equation is how much lb of gold fits in circulation. The number of units of commodities that are in circulation is given, it is an independent variable. The amount of SNALdPaI that was expended to produce each commodity is given by the normal conditions of the moment. The quantity of abstract labor enclosed in 1*or* is also given by what is normal to produce it. And the velocity of circulation of gold is a given technical relation. So one has all the independent variables of the relationship on the second side and the dependent one on the left. The same thing happened with the previous invalid formula: the value of a unit of gold, of commodities, the velocity of circulation... are given. Conclusion: when gold circulates directly, the amount of currency that enters circulation is the dependent variable because each unit of it has a value corresponding to the amount of gold that is materialized. But what happens when gold is replaced by signs of value?

$$q£ = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(q_i \cdot v_{i_£})}{1£ \cdot m}$$

Here the following is valid. This quantity *q* became an independent variable: the state can put into circulation an indefinite number of signs of value externally. For the equation to be satisfied, some that were independent variables now have to be dependent. I start the other way around: the velocity of circulation of money remains independent. When here I had the value of gold, now what I have is a value sign that says 1£, an independent variable. When I look at the number of units produced (*qi*) is still an independent variable. The only one that becomes dependent is the expression of the unit value of commodities in £ ($v_{i£}$) which are simply a symbol.

That is why if more signs with the same name as gold as money enter, the adjustment of the equation will occur on the price side, which is the expression of the value of commodities in signs of value: more signs of value will be needed to express the same magnitude of value as before. Consequently, each of the signs will have lost a proportional part of its capacity to represent value. If this movement is sustained, what we are going to have is a permanent movement, this aggregate of signs of value above those that would fit if a commodity-money circulated, and the prices of all commodities are going to rise continuously. Then, when the signs of value circulate, the quantity of money which enters into circulation is an independent variable, and the expression in it of the value of all commodities is the dependent variable, because each unit of signs of value has no value in itself and must enter into circulation.

[...] I am going to make some clarifications that underlie some of the issues that are involved with this and that normally produce adverse reactions to my particular person and to Marx's development. Marx argues that the law (not in the sense of legal law, but of *what governs movement*) that governs the circulation of signs of value is the opposite of the law that governs the circulation of gold. It's all inverted, but what happens to economists? When they look at the movement they apply to the circulation of gold the laws of the circulation of signs of value and believe that the ability of gold to represent value depends on the amount of gold in circulation. And this is what was known in Marx's time and is still known as the quantity theory of money[81]. Marx criticizes it by saying: they are applying to the circulation of gold the laws of the circulation of signs of value, which are quite the opposite. The ability of gold to express value depends on the value of gold. In the case of signs of value, it depends on the number of signs in circulation as compared to those that would be needed if gold were nominally circulating under that name. Then, this inversion appears.

And what other discussion follows this? It is: with value signs, their ability to represent value does not depend on their quantity, and the state can put more value signs into circulation and that does not increase prices. These are the Keynesian approaches, mixed with the Ricardian ones, there are several variants.

[81] https://economipedia.com/definiciones/teoria-cuantitativa-del-dinero.html

We must consider that here we are looking only at the signs of value replacing gold as a medium of circulation, we are not talking about the means of circulation that are born from the function of money as credit, that is excluded. Today there is a mass of money that is born from its function as a means of payment. In some countries it is not, but in others the mass of circulation of "bank money" is much larger than of signs of value, and the movement is the same but more complex.

If I am going to explain what happens to prices in relation to the number of signs of value in circulation, the starting point is this exposition. But now I am going to take the starting point the other way around: can a seller of commodities increase prices at will? Marx analyzes it in Volume 3 but let us look at this reasoning. If someone [...][82] If we take them above value, then there is no unity in the general movement of social labour, because it is the total mass of social labour that expresses itself in the mass of value of commodities. If someone is arbitrarily increasing their price above that level, what amounts is that there is someone else who is driving it down. But what Marx is going to propose is: if each owner of commodities could increase prices by x%, why can't he increase it 2x%, or 10x%? And if someone has the power to increase the price of his commodity above the value, why wouldn't other private and independent producers have that power?

Even in those simple terms, an explanation appears, that one of its authors was an Argentine who died not so long ago, Julio H. G. Olivera. His analysis says: there is an active money and a passive money. The asset would be what is placed here, and passive money is: since someone increases the price, the state validates it by throwing more signs of value into circulation: "passively", the quantity of money accompanies the increase in prices at the will of the sellers of commodities.

If I look at whether prices can be raised arbitrarily, I first have two variables: 1) *q* of money; 2) price increase. If I say that no one can increase prices at will above value because the unity between production and social consumption through value is going to be imposed, the starting point cannot be the arbitrary increase in prices. If I look at the other variable, I leave the will of the commodity owners alone and change the quantity of money, what is going to happen is that (if we consider that more signs of value entered than could fit at that time) that money put into circulation is represented as a greater solvent social need, which is faced with a quantity of produced commodities that is given. And consequently, in the first instance (we will take it as if it were general, on average) all commodity sellers find that there is more solvent social need for their commodities than before. And that solvent social need has to be reduced by raising the price.

It is not, then, the will of the commodity owners that mediates, but it is the very mechanism of the circulation of the unity between social production and consumption in the face of a movement that is placed as external to that production. Marx quotes W. Petty, a doctor about 100 years before Adam Smith, and refers to him as the father of political economy. He quotes an expression of his where he says: if social wealth could be multiplied by decree, it would be

[82] The recording is cut off.

surprising if states were not dictating them all the time because what more could a state want than to multiply social wealth?

By way of clarification: when the normality in a national economy is that there is a permanent increase in the general level of prices because more signs of value are permanently entering circulation than could be possible with respect to the mass of value that must be circulated... One has to differentiate the mechanism from the reason why more signs of value are put in circulation, one cannot explain it by referring to a crazy person in the central bank. There are no crazy people there (sometimes there are characters who deserve the description, but that's not why they're there). When systematically this is a concrete form of a national process of capital accumulation, what we have to ask ourselves is what role does this play, which is as normal in that process as the absence of this phenomenon in other processes.

The other issue at stake is that what does change is who has this general representative of social wealth. If the state issues the signs of value and gives them to a particular subject, he now has more titles to the total social wealth than before, and consequently the rest have fewer titles than before. What is clear is that this mechanism is a form of appropriation of wealth. This is what appeared with the counterfeiting of money by princes. […] This is the mechanism in its simplest version, the reason for this mechanism does not fit at this point.

What Marx is going to propose is a synthesis of this: why can gold be replaced by signs of value that are in themselves worthless in circulation? Because of the role that money plays as a means of C: to allow commodities to change hands. They remain within circulation, they cannot leave, it is the function they fulfill that allows this movement. They have to have social validity, that capacity to represent value fleetingly when each exchange of commodity occurs, and consequently it reappears that the condition is that they have forced course given by the state. Therefore, it can only fulfill this function as a means of circulation within the space that corresponds to this state.

3. Money.

a) *Hoarding*

With this we would move on to point 3 of chapter III, which is when Marx is going to put *money* as a synthesis of the developments that we have been seeing so far, and what is going to unfold in this regard: the definition is at the end of the development. There are a series of statements that are those that were deployed previously: money is the commodity that functions as a measure of value or as a means of circulation, either by itself or through a sign. Gold and silver are money in this function. It may act on its own, it may function as an ideal measure of value, and it may function (in that case it is not in circulation) with a representative in circulation [the signs of value]. It is then the full, unique form of existence of exchange value vis-à-vis other commodities.

And Marx is now going to develop functions that arise from his function as money. The first is going to be the function of hoarding, to function as a treasure. Up to this point we saw gold moving in circulation. Each commodity producer knew that what he had to produce was value, the representation of which is money. And what appears so far was this "evanescent" function of gold as a medium of circulation. Money acts in a continuous movement, and what is going to appear is the transformation of money from that continuous movement functioning as currency, to simply functioning as money when the metamorphosis of the commodity is interrupted: there is a sale that is not followed by a purchase and the money is retained out of circulation.

There is a first step in Marx's development in which this sale not followed by purchase emerges as a possibility of a formal character. It is a movement that [...][83] If you have sold a commodity that has a certain value, you want to buy another commodity with a higher unit value, then you have to sell several units of your commodity until you accumulate the amount of money necessary to buy the other. Or it may be that one goes into circulation and the commodity you wanted to buy is not there. But now what is going to appear is that it is not simply a circumstantial matter, but that the purpose of the sale is to immobilize the money out of circulation. It is not selling a use-non-value for one to arrive at a use-value for oneself, but to arrive at money. What is going to happen is a transformation of the personification of the commodity because money is going to become treasure and the seller is going to become a hoarder, the one who personifies the treasured money.

It will appear as a form that is born from the beginning of the movement of commodity circulation, because what the hoarder, which has the form of being a mass of social wealth, retains is social power: the ability to say what is the product of SNALdPaI and what is not. But it is a social power that cannot be exercised, it is retained, because one buys to exercise it, and then it ceases to function as a treasure.

Marx then goes on to look at the development of how hoarded gold is arrived at and begins by looking at how gold enters circulation. We have again this thing that the gold producer does not sell, he always buys because what he has is money. And now what has to appear in this movement is a sale that is not accompanied by a purchase. As the gold flows in the process of circulation, it is retained at various points and these treasures of gold and silver appear in different quantities. This takes shape in the consciousness of the treasurer. The "greed for gold" will appear as its determination, since it represents social power: in a society where social wealth is expressed in money, everything is bought and everything is sold, whether or not it is a commodity. It is the possibility of disposing of social power, which transforms every social relation in the capitalist mode of production into a bond of money.

Marx makes reference to how the development of money dissolves all previous bonds (of personal dependence), and then denounces the role of money in

[83] It is cut.

societies where they are being dissolved, as "degrading" the life of society. Here there is an objectified representation of social wealth, which is privately owned, and the magnitude of that social power is determined by the magnitude of the treasure, and consequently the only qualitative difference between one treasure and another is a quantitative difference. And then what appears is another determination of the hoarder's consciousness: he has no limit, he is always going further in his eagerness to retain gold as money and sell without buying. Marx says that it is like the torment of Sisyphus in the process of accumulation: every time he reaches a limit on his treasury, he has to do the same thing he has just done so that his treasure increases. And he is going to say that it is the same as the conquerors of the world, that in each country they conquer they find a new frontier and they are going to try to go further.

"The hoarder sacrifices to the fetish of gold the pleasures of the flesh"[84]: he abstains from consuming, he is industrious, miserly... These are the virtues of the hoarder, "and to sell much and to buy little the compendium of his economic science."[85] Later, in very different terms, Marx will refer to the fact that, beyond certain limits, the treasure is not simply an accumulation of gold, of social wealth, but that it begins to have aesthetic forms, of exhibition of that wealth, which is not simply the mass of gold coins. That in any case, every time it is necessary it goes to the foundry, it comes out of the aesthetic form and it will work like money.

Thomas: I remember that phrase of Proudhon's that always stuck with me, that the "accumulator", in some way, by putting money out of circulation, cancels it out. What would Proudhon have meant? And the second thing I would ask you is that... By taking it out of circulation, is the money that remains going to be worth more?

JIC: I could not answer you about Proudhon because I do not have him in mind. It sounds to me like the quantity theory of money: it is taken out of circulation and then it ceases to have an effect on prices. But I cannot assure you that this is the meaning that Proudhon gives it. Regarding hoarding... Here I am going to make a comparison that I should not make at this point.

The hoarder keeps the gold, he does not use it as capital. Marx will later say that the capitalist is the rational hoarder, because what he does is multiply the money he has with that money. The hoarder by himself does not multiply it. The aesthetic form appears, and he is also going to put it with respect to the capitalists. In his origin the capitalist is industrious and thrifty and is required to invest and expand his capital, but at a certain height (this is much more complex in its development) the representation of capital also needs the aesthetic form, which shows the luster that the possessor of that money has. It is part of functioning as a capitalist/hoarder, of your consciousness. I return to the above: it is quite possible that Proudhon adhered to the quantity theory of money that the quantity of gold in circulation affects prices.

Javiera: It is not clear to me what happens to the money that is hoarded. Is it devalued?

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[84] Marx, K. (1977: 91) *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[85] Ibid.

JIC: Treasure only makes sense not with signs of value, but with gold. The misfortune that can happen to the hoarder is that the productivity of the labor produced by gold increases and the value of the accumulated gold decreases, but that is not what is in the analysis here. We assume that the productivity of that labor is constant and what the hoarder retained is a mass of value, a capacity to dispose of the product of social labor performed privately and independently that is in a latent state. So far what has appeared is how the formation of the treasures that are appearing moves. What follows is what role these treasures play, beyond the fact that it is an accumulation of social wealth by an individual.

Javiera: I have another doubt. Marx speaks as if these forms of hoarding were "eternalized" in peoples with a traditional mode of production. Did it exist before capitalism, only in capitalism, or how?

JIC: Hoarding comes from a process of circulation of commodities within societies where the general social relationship is bonds of personal dependence and not money. By making buying independent of selling (it appeared with the possibility of crisis), it makes the supply of commodities spatially independent. That is one of the aspects of its power: I can sell here and I go to buy in another community (another space of production and social consumption), etc. It then has the power to multiply the productive forces of human labor with respect to primitive communities and dissolves the bonds of personal dependence.

In societies like this, money and the incipient hoarding process is seen as a condemnable process: it dissolves society. It is not that in these societies there is hoarding and then in the capitalist mode of production it will be displaced by accumulation. In any case, treasures remain, I advance it: their modern form is national treasures. There are private treasures but the expression of that treasure is those of the states. For the multiplication of social wealth in this form, capital is much more powerful than the treasury, which only accumulates and is dead, it does not multiply by itself. Capital is money that does multiply by itself. The figure of hoarding is linked to the transition to the capitalist mode of production. In the capitalist mode of production it is erased, the central figure of the manifestation of wealth is not the treasure, but capital.

I could never find the source, but someone once suggested to me: the origin of the "sabbatical year", of the expression "forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors", comes from Jewish society (I don't know from what time) in the process of dissolving the bonds of personal dependence, where for 7 years the commercial bond develops, and the jubilee at 7 years of age is: "We are back to square one", [86]and there is again the personal bond, for the reproduction of the life of society, it returns to the point of the bond of personal dependence. That's why it's like debts don't run anymore, it's like: we shuffle and give again. I never took the trouble to try to verify this, nor do I remember who brought it up to me, but he was someone respectable.

[86] RAE: "1. loc. adv. colloq. *Arg. and your*. As at the beginning or from the beginning. *Everything went back to square one. Let him restart the process from scratch*."

It is this transition to the dissolution of the bonds of personal dependence that is seen as the disintegration of society, and in the transition from feudalism to capitalism it is very marked. Marx quotes Shakespeare about money. In Spanish literature there is the Archpriest of Hita, from the early thirteenth century, who has his *Book of Good Love*, where he has the examples or I don't know what, which is about what money does. The reference is very clear to the dissolution, rather than of ties, of personal attributes. What appears there are the properties "that money has" (in old Spanish). Money makes the individual who is good for nothing, who does not have certain personal attributes, equal to those who have them. And it is the condemnation of that transition. If I remember correctly, St. Francis of Assisi is also one of the expressions of this dissolution: the condemnation of money as money, and consequently of the treasury (not capital).

We move on. What appears is which function follows the treasure. Up to this point it seemed to spring from the fact that wealth has this form and accumulates, there is the consciousness of the hoarder, and here the function of the treasure will appear: to regulate the amount of gold that is in circulation. When there is leftover, it is hoarded, when it is missing, the treasure goes to the foundry and returns as currency to circulation. A lung of money is needed to sustain the fluidity of circulation. Like any system that regulates itself, the only way to maintain its functioning in the face of fluctuations is to have this lung where what is left over is removed and from where it is taken when it is missing.

b) *Means of payment.*

Now we should enter into the function of money as a means of payment. Here there will appear a reversal in the metamorphosis movement of commodities and consequently in the moment when the owners of commodities can enter into relationship with each other. First there was this issue that the relations between buyer and seller can be mediated by moments in which it is sold and not bought. There are use values that are sold from time to time because they are going to be used, their consumption will cover a long period of time (Marx gives the example of housing), and here appears the possibility of buying before paying.

There is a seller who sells his commodity, but the buyer does not give money in exchange, but a promise of money: it is the purchase and sale on credit. Then the figure of seller and buyer also changes: the seller becomes a creditor and the buyer becomes a debtor. Now money is going to intervene as a means of payment. In this intervention of money as a means of payment, it is no longer simply the instantaneous relationship between personifications of commodities and money, now they are creditor and debtor, there is a relationship between 2 personifications that they will maintain over time until the debtor cancels his debt. So Marx observes that it is going to be less peaceful and that it has a more manifest objectification because now it must be established that the buyer bought but did not pay. This permanent objectification of the relationship and its antagonistic character can be projected onto people, in particular on that of the debtor when the creditor tells him: "If you don't pay me I'm going to break your legs". It can then affect as a "person," so to speak.

Javiera: It is not clear to me what the equivalent would be that the debtor would be delivering[87].

JIC: The debtor has to deliver the money, which first has the form of a promise to pay that is in the person of the debtor.

Javiera: That's what I'm going for: I don't understand in what sense the promise of payment is an equivalent.

JIC: It has to be converted into an effective equivalent, you have to pay. Here the order of the cycle is altered. In the function of money as a medium of circulation is: it is sold to buy. In its function as a means of payment, the commodity has already been purchased, withdrawn from circulation and taken into the sphere of consumption, and its use value may even have been consumed. Now: you have to pay. So the buyer on credit has to sell to pay, not to buy because he has already done so, he has disposed of the use value. There he has to take the hard cash, he has to get that real money from this sale.

The representation of the movement of money as a medium of circulation is this:

$$C_1\text{-}M\text{-}C_2 \nearrow Co$$

It is selling M1 to buy, taking M2 out of circulation and taking it to the sphere of consumption (*Co*). Marx does not use subscripts, I do it for pedagogical reasons.

This is that of money as treasure: it is sold to hoard money, the movement has been cut off.

$$C_1 — M$$

And this is the function of money as a means of payment:

$$C_2 \nearrow Co \qquad C_1\text{-}M$$

Here the M1 and M2 are useful. I bought the M2, I took it to consumption, and now I have to sell M1 to have money and give it in circulation to the creditor: I sell to pay.

Aristides: Likewise, Juan: does that have a legal form like the purchase and sale, is it a contract, let's say?

[87] Later Javiera says that she believed that it was a loan and not a purchase to be paid in the future, as in the installment sale, etc. In other cases it is the opposite: it is paid in advance before the use value is available for consumption, that is, before its sale takes place.

JIC: It always is, what happens is that it is a contract that has much more forms... Marx uses the term "crystallized", because I buy and pay on the spot and the simple transaction is all the formalization that is needed. This legally appears with the terms... There are purchases and sales that require more formalization, but with movable property, the legal reflection of this is that possession presumes ownership. If I have something movable, it is because there was a purchase transaction. In fact, one makes a lot of purchases that do not have any type of formalization, rather the formalization comes for tax issues, the invoice is because the state needs to control that the operation has been made.

In the case of credit, it does have to have a longer formalization because it has to be recorded that the buyer is now a debtor and has to pay at a certain time. With which, documentation appears that is no longer simply for the control of the state, but is proof that the debt exists: precisely because possession presumes ownership, I have to prove that the individual has what I sold him, but he did not pay me. It is identified who is the debtor and who is the creditor. In the purchase and sale it is not necessary by its own form to formalize who is one and who is the other.

We need to finish a little bit of this function of money as a means of payment. But in what follows there will appear a statement by Marx that gives particular food for thought. I mention it now but we are not going to develop it. The expression that Marx is going to use referring to what happens to the debtor in this relationship, is this, he says:

> It is also possible that these same roles are presented on the scene independently of the circulation of commodities. Thus, for example, the class struggle of the ancient world," that is, classical Greece and classical Rome, "takes the form primarily of a struggle between creditors and debtors, ending in the subjugation of plebeian debtors, who have become slaves[88].

And this contrasts with the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, where there is a reference to the fact that history up to this point has the form of the class struggle, and in that struggle the slaves and the masters appear. And we always stop to think about what meaning this contrast can have, what it is that appears in this movement.

We are missing a long piece of the function of money as a means of payment, and then what Marx is going to consider the full expression of money will appear, which is world money. And then it is going to unfold its functions, and world money today has forms that are given, so to speak, "kicked" with several of the things that were appearing and in particular do not coincide, or are not fully presented in the form that Marx puts here. And then we are going to look at what Marx is proposing and then we are going to ask ourselves if these forms that appear there are still valid or not, and if we can account for the functions of world money today simply with what we have so far.

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[88] Marx, K. (1977: 93), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

[II]

We had been seeing the function of money as a means of payment, the transformation of the seller into a creditor and the creditor into a debtor, and of money into a promise to pay. When Marx is deploying this function of money, he is going to say: not only is the development of this function linked to the movement of circulation of commodities, but these conditions of debtor and creditor arise independently of circulation. And he gives an example of the class struggle of the ancient world in which plebeian debtors end up becoming slaves. He then goes on to add: "In the Middle Ages, this struggle ends with the defeat of the feudal debtor, who loses his political power by losing his economic base." This relationship is born outside the exchange of commodities.

I was always struck by the reference to the class struggle, where here it appears as a relationship that is established between debtors and creditors, consequently between personifications, not between people. And it is since specifically this relationship is the class struggle, which contrasts with the *Manifesto* that begins by saying: "The history of every society up to the present day has been nothing but the history of the class struggle." And in *Capital*, Marx... One can say that it is actually because of the way it is exposed, or that it is not, that it is highlighting a specificity. But he says that it ends with the defeat of the plebeian debtors, who become slaves. The struggle between masters and slaves does not appear. In the FCE translation it does not appear to which ancient society Marx is referring when he gives the example, because he says "in ancient society" and then specifically this relationship is going to occur, it is in the case of Rome. In the other translations the reference to Rome appears.

From my point of view, this approach opens a question and forces us to confront it. The class struggle is either common to every form of society, or the class struggle – and therefore the classes – is proper to the relation between personifications mediated by money, whether or not it arises from the circulation of commodities. But in the case of debtor and creditor, what we have are not relations of personal dependence, but between mutually free individuals. This is something that we have to keep in mind when we continue to advance and in particular the social classes appear in reference to the relationship between personifications, when the term "classes" refers to the relationship between workers and capitalists reappears. In the *Manifesto*, class struggle refers to antagonistic relations between social subjects who have ties of personal dependence. And here it is emphasized as specifically typical of individuals who do not have ties of personal dependence. That one is *classified* not by one's personal attributes but by one's status as personification.

I simply want to highlight and discuss it as much as you want, but what I emphasize is that there are two ways of presenting the classes throughout Marx's texts. Beyond the clarification that Engels introduces regarding the statement of the *Manifesto*, which obscures more than it clarifies, because Engels is going to refer to written history, but it is clear that the paragraph that is in the original text is speaking not of written history but of the entire development of human society, with which the contradiction appears in this affirmation with respect to primitive

communism where the question is whether or not there are antagonistic relations within that society. Marx had spoken of the primitive community at this point.

I make another clarification, which is that it often appears in the terms of the *Manifesto* as the class struggle is the "motor of history", but to say that History is the history of the class struggle, does not mean that *what moves* historical development is the class struggle, but that historical development *has the form* of class struggle. But in the *Manifesto* it is presented as universal and in *Capital* it refers to the antagonistic relations between creditors and debtors (links established through money), not to the antagonistic relations mediated by bonds of personal dependence.

Javiera: In this translation the Rome thing appears, but it says: "The class struggle in the ancient world develops *mainly*...", so, when I read it again, it seems to me that in its generality it would appear under this form of personification, and then my question is like: of course, what would be that other thing that emerges from what is not *principal*? And now that you say it, years ago we argued with some comrades and I am left with the doubt about the *Manifesto*, for me the class struggle was the form that mediated the relations between personifications, I had not put it on with this thing of people.

JIC: It is normal to read that the class struggle (because it is in the *Manifesto*) is a relationship between people, universally taken. What I emphasize is: one can take it abstractly in this way, or one has to distinguish it as a condition that is proper to the relations between individuals who do not have ties of personal dependence. When one thinks of ancient society, it is mainly not a struggle between debtors and creditors, but between masters and slaves. Therefore in feudal society it is not between feudal debtors and feudal creditors, it is between lords and serfs (it is thus stated in the *Manifesto*).

Here there is a reference to social classes in a society that until now we only know that there are producers of commodities that are all the same, there is no differentiation between them. We see that they have universal antagonistic relations, all with all, it is not of some against other producers/owners of commodity, so up to this point it is not possible to stop at a differentiated class determination. But for me it is important to emphasize it. When we are faced with the differentiation between commodity holders, we are going to face again, what name corresponds to this antagonistic relationship between commodity owners who have different attributes of a specific nature. For now it is nothing more to produce unease. All relationships are antagonistic: between buyer and seller, which "has a greater crystallization" in that of debtor-creditor, which continues until the debtor cancels the debt by paying it. But there is not a class of debtors and a class of creditors in what we look at in the commercial relationship. The reference to classes is placed in *Capital* outside the capitalist mode of production, but it refers to relations between subjects who do not have ties of personal dependence. As if one were classified not by a personal attribute, but by a condition external to the person.

[Responding to Aristides] [...] In *Capital* , what appears makes one wonder if the *Manifesto* is the same, because the reference to this antagonistic relationship is not to be linked not to personal dependence, but rather to the fact that this class struggle develops and *ends* in bonds of personal dependence. It does not say that it takes the form of a struggle between masters and slaves, it says that it "culminates" (which can have different meanings) in the transformation of plebeian debtors into slaves. And then the feudal debtor appears. The question is simply: here I look at it and two different expressions appear regarding what a class and the class struggle are. My intention in raising it is: this is something worth noting and asking yourself about your determinations. Since we have not yet reached the social classes in the capitalist mode of production, it would be a leap to try to answer ourselves on this. But let's keep in mind, that this is an issue we need to dwell on.

The "engine of history" appears very markedly in the proposals in which the determination is turned around with respect to something else that appeared in Chapter II, the relationship between the economic base and the legal superstructure. Because if what moves the process is the class relation, what explains the movement of the economic relation is the relation between the classes, it is not that the economic base takes shape in the class struggle but that the class struggle takes shape in the economic bases. In any case (I don't remember well now), in the text that is one of the bases of the *Manifesto*, written by Engels[89] as a catechism, the phrase is not like that but it can be closer to that version. But in the *published Manifesto* there is no class struggle as the engine of history. If I am not mistaken, that expression appears in Althusser.

Ignacio: I have a cup that says that the engine of history is the class struggle. What do I do, do I throw it away?

JIC: I don't think it's for... Subject it to criticism, I don't know [laughs].

[…] We continue to make progress with the function of money as a means of payment. What happened with the introduction of the means of payment with respect to what we saw with money as a means of circulation? In the medium of circulation, the two poles of movement were simultaneous (buying and selling). Now what is going to appear is that the price is no longer immediately realized in money: it appears as a promise of money. The buyer is obliged to pay. So, Marx goes on to express that if money functioned as a measure of value in function as a medium of circulation, now it functions (in addition to as a measure of value) as an ideal means of purchase: money is not present in the transaction, only its promise.

The next thing that is going to happen with the movement of money as a medium of circulation, what we had is that it always remained in circulation, it could not be taken out of circulation. What appeared was that circumstantially he could get out of it. In the function of money as treasure, if it comes out, circulation is interrupted. Now money as a means of payment enters circulation, but no longer with the exit of the commodity, but it has already come out, it has been realized as

[89] The text is *Principles of Communism*.

use value. There is a closure of the cycle of metamorphosis that moves independently of the movement of commodities and that closes by putting money into circulation. The purpose of the debtor's sale is not to access the use value (buy) but to pay. I propose that we continue with this and then return to a synthesis of what movement tells us from the function of money as a means of circulation, as treasure and as a means of payment, and how this flows later in the exposition that follows chapter III.

What there is is in this process is that the buyer can convert his money into a commodity without having first converted the commodity into money that has the form of a promise to pay. The 2nd metamorphosis of the commodity is placed in front of the 1st. But from the seller's point of view, this alteration of the cycle of metamorphosis means that his commodities are not realized in money, but in a private legal title that gives him the right to a sum of money. From the buyer's point of view, commodities have been transformed into a use-value before they have been converted into money. Now what is going to appear is what happens in circulation with the appearance of credit instruments as symbols of money. This function of money as a means of payment alters what we had seen regarding the amount of money that fits in circulation. Now it is no longer enough to consider the mass of purchases or sales (which is the same) that occurred in a certain period of time, but now part of that buying and selling was not converted into money that is in circulation within the period of time that one is looking at. The flip side of this is that in the period of time that one is looking at, it is necessary for money to operate in circulation that does not correspond to the purchases and sales of the same period. So what Marx is going to look at in development is how the means of payment circulate.

What is going to appear is no longer the concatenation between purchases and sales, but between creditors and debtors and what the payment terms are. The contrast between what is expressed in the function of money as a medium of circulation and what will appear in the movement of means of payment is that in the former there is no link between buyers and sellers prior to the transaction. Interdependence appears to emerge in the movement of the transaction. On the other hand, with respect to the means of payment, there is a social interdependence that preexists the movement of the means of payment. If up to this point we have said: in the capitalist mode of production there is no social bond of interdependence that precedes the movement of money, here what appears is that there is a pre-existing link. The appearance of no bond is now taking the form of the pre-existence of a bond — not personal, but established indirectly.

Then there is the development of the circulation of means of payment, the possibility of compensation, and how money is replaced in transactions – either by itself or by a symbol – by the functioning of means of payment also as symbols of value. And the possibility then of eliminating the effective movement of money and replacing it with an ideal function that exists as a measure of value in a register, that real money is not needed to sustain the movement of commodities in circulation, but that what is going to appear is this displacement of real money. When money appears in the movement of circulation, it does so as the full expression of value, of the social character of labour, as an autonomous existence

of exchange value, because it no longer appears in a movement of exchange of commodities, but of the balance of the compensation of credits and debts. It appears as the absolute commodity. When this movement of payment compensation develops, where money appears only separated from commodity transactions, as a pure expression of social wealth, every disturbance of the movement appears as a crisis of money: as if there is not enough cash, hard and cold, to replace the ideal money.

Marx goes on to sum this up by saying: at the moment when the flow of circulation through the function of money as a means of payment is prosperous, there is no money other than the commodity, the only thing that matters is the possibility of buying and selling and it is being done with promises of payment. But when this movement is interrupted and it becomes clear that the promise of payment is not real money, but ideal, this is reversed and what appears – it makes a reference to the world market, which is a leap with respect to what we are seeing of the simple production of commodities – is that there are no commodities other than money. The only thing that is wanted is this representative of social wealth. That is why this crisis is the expression of the divorce between the commodity and the form of value that is money. Here then appears the effect that I had raised earlier as to how much money is needed in circulation during a certain period of time. It is no longer enough with the mass of value that is bought, but here it mediates what happens with the payment periods, in which debts and the magnitude of the debts have to be canceled. As the clearing movement operates, the full mass of value that is closing at the time of payment does not appear either.

What follows development is the forms of money that spring from the function of money as a means of payment. Since what you have is a title, a piece of paper where the promise of payment is, and they are used in transactions, in compensation movements, in debt balances, these titles begin to replace the money of the generality of commercial movements. And what Marx is going to propose here, referring to gold and silver, is: they only remain in the sphere of small-scale trade. Today the corresponding forms, those arising from credit, the forms of D-credit, flow abundantly even in small-scale trade, there is a transformation in this function of money as a means of payment. In Argentina it does so on a relatively smaller scale than in other places, where practically no gold and silver circulate, but not even signs of value: they are promises of payment, accounting compensations, which sometimes do not take the form of a security but of an accounting entry[90].

What Marx is going to point out is a new function of money as a means of payment. As it develops, it no longer functions simply in the sphere of the circulation of commodities, but becomes the general commodity of contracts.

[90] Wiki: "[...] Set of accounting entries or entries that are made in the accounting journal, which are made with the purpose of recording an economic event that causes a quantitative or qualitative modification in the composition of a company's assets and therefore a movement in its accounts. In the double-entry system, each entry is made up of at least two entries: one to the debit and one to the credit. These two positions make inverse movements, and affect the assets or liabilities, and are based on the fact that every entry affects at least two accounts and each movement has a counterpart."

Every payment that is going to be made—"rents" (referring to personal income), taxes...—becomes payments in money as a means of payment, where one is not buying. He makes an observation regarding the Japan of the time, he refers to the trade imposed by Europe that makes all income in kind become an income in money and that this will destroy "its wonderful agriculture, whose strict economic conditions of life will be dissolved".[91] He is going to refer to conditions in different countries by saying: there are different general deadlines for payments, there is a normality in the movement of all payments, those deadlines also extend to other payments that do not have to do with the immediate circulation of commodities. And the amount of means of payment that are needed to sustain the movement of all these types of transactions or contracts in money will have a direct relationship with how long the term to pay is.

The last point I want to emphasize is: we saw the function of money as treasure. What Marx is going to emphasize is that as the function of money as a means of payment develops, the existence of a reserve fund of means of payment is necessary. Hoarding is then displaced by a certain degree of accumulation of means of payment. There needs to be a cushion, because if the movement expands further and contracts, it will be necessary to be able to enter into the transactions means of payment that were not there until now, or that others that have been working until now be withdrawn.

Javiera: It is not very clear to me about the reserve fund.

JIC: When we looked at hoarding for the first time, it appeared to spring from the "miserability" of the hoarder. As we continued to move forward, we saw that it serves the function of being a cushion of money. Now: money in its form as a medium of circulation is being displaced in movement by money as a means of payment. What is going to appear is: there are those who withdraw means of payment from circulation and retain them, so a reserve is formed. They are not simply adjusted to the immediate movement, but now the form of hoarding (I make the caveat: it is not exactly the same, because signs of value were not treasured, they were only in circulation), but here what appears is that the treasure is coming to have the form not of gold and silver but of other people's debt securities.

Today treasures are basically national treasures. There are forms of hoarding that regardless of the form it takes, money is stored as money. The national treasuries of most countries, the central bank reserves, originally appeared as a gold reserve. Then comes the gold and foreign exchange reserves (which are signs of value). Today those treasures basically have debt securities, promises of payment that are not simple promises of payment as money because they include interest. So, the reserve that is needed for money, since money itself practically does not circulate, the reserve is not constituted by that money but as money that has the form of credit instruments.

Ignacio: Aren't those debt securities also treasured in signs of value?

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[91] Marx, K. (1977: 98), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

JIC: The debt security is *denominated* in signs of value. That's what we have to look at now. Apart from that, there are signs of value in the national treasures (not all of them, but...). All of us here are treasured in signs of value and debt securities essentially.

Ignacio: In other words, of course, physically the sign of value would not be treasured, but nominally.

JIC: No, no, physically there are situations in which it may not be there, but at the same time it is physically there, what happens is that one part is as signs of value and the other as credit instruments, which can be physically or deposited elsewhere. But they have that form of a reserve of promises to pay, which here is complicated in its determination because they are promises to pay a *capital* that is lent at interest, they are not simply of commercial transactions, but of money that is functioning as capital.

c) *World money*.

We enter into the question of money as world money, which leads us to another one that we had not stopped at before with respect to... One can put it in terms of a certain ambiguity in what is the social unit that one is looking at. I look at this first. In the first paragraph of Chapter I it says: "In societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails...", so there are different societies. It does not appear as if the mode of production has a general unity from which it has specific forms which are separate. Later, when he is unfolding the determinations of value and its form, what appears is a general unity. There are some references in the examples to areas that appear as specific. But development has a general character where, well: this is the capitalist mode of production.

When one enters chapter II and the relationship between the possessors of commodities and the contract, the legal relations, appears, it appears that the general validity of contracts has to be given to them by someone who corresponds to the figure of the state. But that it can be a generic state, it is not a reference to a national state. When the function of money appears as a price standard, the state appears again, because this has to have an external determination, and there is a mixture of whether it is a generic state because in concrete historical development it appears that the patterns are imposed from different places that converge. When the medium of circulation is reached, the condition appears that it has a general validity, and it is given by the state. And references appear to: it is in a country the number of signs of value, it is a certain place the amount of money that is going to be needed in circulation... In this function of money as a means of payment, taxes appear, which presupposes the existence of something that is the state. But was he referring to a country or, in a generic sense, as the general movement of capital abstracted from national forms?

This will be repeated throughout the development of *Capital*. In view of the development of this general determination, forms would appear that in the

historical process up to now correspond to national forms. Or you can look the other way around: he was always referring to a certain national form. Fed by the fact that it appears "in societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails", and in the preface (or postface) there is a reference to England as a full expression of the development of the capitalist mode of production. For me, the way in which Marx does development confronts me with the general unity, which in the development of the capitalist mode of production is a world unity that has national forms. So I'm going to clash with the way in which it is sometimes exposed in the other way, as a confluence of national spaces.

Ignatius: What is a state in its general form?

JIC: So far I don't know what a state is other than by its name. I imagine it, there are references, but it did not spring from development itself, the state appears as if it were outside the movement that springs autonomously from the production of commodities. I have the status generically. I made a premature reference to the fact that it is a social relation, a way of organizing the process of human life, but so far it did not spring from the movement of the capitalist mode of production. "Burst" formally when I say: we need someone to give forced course to the signs of value, to give general validity to the contracts... It does not appear with a "real" determination. It is premature to try to answer what it is.

So let's get to the question of world money. Up to this point we had all these determinations corresponding to fragments within the general unit of the metabolism process. Signs of value have a national scope (taxes, etc.). What is Marx going to propose about this? He did not say, "I am going to start with an internal sphere of circulation": this sphere appeared throughout looking at the forms of the functions of money. And now what it is going to say is that now we leave the internal spheres of circulation, and there money loses everything that is local forms: price standard, currency, signs of value. It takes the immediate form of the precious metal: they are bars, gold (and silver) ingots that have no monetary name but are expressed in quantities of gold. Commodities express their value with a universal character, and in that universality the form which their value takes is the form of world money. It is on the world market that money will function in the form of a commodity, a body, a certain amount of a use-value, in which this natural form is at the same time the full expression of abstract labour.

Marx is going to summarize it by making an observation (which I don't like) which is: "(...) its existence is entirely in line with its concept." One can read it as saying that this is what Marx says in the postface to the 2nd German edition that he had flirted with Hegel's way of expressing himself and gives as an example the chapter on the theory of value, or it can be seen here as "the content and the form of existence", that the content is immediately expressed under the form, that the form is immediately the content in its purity. It can also be read in the sense that there is a form that is the very expression of the content. It is not the only time Marx has used it, in other places as well. When one reproduces the concrete through thought, one does so as a process of recognition from the social point of view, one is guided in the process of confronting not the text, but money in its real movement, because one is asking oneself about one's own subjectivity. One

submits this development to criticism in this process of recognition, and says: I can face it in this way, it is a problem of an existence that fits its concept or it is the expression of the content under the simplest form, which is the one that is operating as a concrete form. And to me this expression seems unclear, erroneous, which lends itself to idealist readings: this is a problem of concepts. This is kicked by Marx's proposal that he does not dedicate himself to starting, intertwining or discussing concepts (it is in the *Glosses to Wagner*, where he makes a synthesis of the method).

Javiera: Doesn't it say "concept" because you have already advanced in the determinations that account for what money is?

JIC: What would be the concept of "money"? When I confront it, I try to appropriate it, to reproduce that expression for myself and I say: what is the concept? Why should I call it a "concept" if this term is something that is conceived in thought, not the materiality of existence? That expression doesn't mean anything to me, I can read it and say: "Maybe I wanted to say *this*." It doesn't help me to keep moving forward because I don't know what the concept of money is. I can recognize what the deployment of money is, it is the directly social way in which abstract labor is expressed, but why should I call that the "concept of money"? I cannot reproduce that way of expounding.

Aristides: At some point a kind of synthesis appears, as a point of arrival after having deployed each of the determinations [...].

JIC: Here's the synthesis. Why call that "form fits the concept" (especially with these connotations)? When one says "I have the concept of this" it is to take a concrete form and attribute determinations to it as if they were its generic determinations, unlike the name. When I say the name, what I say is an abstract universal, but if I want to account for that abstract universal, the abstract universal is of no use to me... It's the name. In the first chapter he begins the development and says "the capitalist mode of production": it is a name, an external image of something that is called that. The same thing happens with the commodity: I don't know what it is, it is what is commonly, universally, called a commodity. When do I begin to transcend that abstract universal?

In the analysis I begin to wonder about the necessity that this object contains. But I don't give the reason for what the commodity is when I'm analyzing it, what I do is "kill" it. I give the reason when I begin to deploy the simplest specific determination of the commodity (the product of the SNALdPaI) and what I begin to look at is how that product moves, and that's when I began the development of giving a reason for what a commodity is. And when I give a reason, I advance and I find that the commodity, when I unfold its reason, takes the form of money, money takes these forms, and I unfold those determinations. On the other hand, if I have a concept... All political economy starts from concepts. Ricardo called his book *Principles of Political Economy*, and when one speaks of "principles" it is because one is enunciating what concepts it starts from and it is not necessary to found them, to give an account of them.

In logical representation it is like this: logical principles are not founded, they are not demonstrated, but they are stated: "This is so," and from these concepts follows the construction of the other concepts. What does logic do? Since his principle says that no concrete existence can contain a necessity that does not immediately express itself identical to itself in form, it implies that the only manifestation of necessity, of reason, is repetition, and then the concept is constructed as a starting point by looking at what is repeated and separating it from what is not repeated. and I have the concept that it is no longer the name. In the case of the concept of value, in Ricardo it is the concept of labor as the value of commodities. In neoclassical it is: utility and scarcity is the value of commodities. And we don't start by saying that we are going to look at the 'theory of value' (I have my objections to that, Marx uses it) and we start from the fact that value is SNALdPaI. We started by asking ourselves about the need for the commodities, not about what was repeated. We started by looking at two commodities, and then we said: it is enough for me to look at one, the question is what it can have in common with the other, not what is repeated, but how it is possible that it has a common attribute with the other. And we did all the value analysis by looking at a commodity.

I have a dilemma about whether or not to enter into an argument, and a form of discussion that does not fit the "concept" I have of discussion. Because if someone tells me that we are going to discuss the "subjective/objective theory of value," my answer is that I don't know what those theories are. If I have to answer what value is, then I go from the simplest determination: what is human life? It is a process of metabolism carried out through work. What is work? It is this productive expenditure of the body carried out in a specific useful form, a specific individual activity with a social character... Until we get to... what is the unit of each cycle of the human metabolism process? Assign to each member of society what concrete useful work he is going to do for the others and consequently what part of the product of the labor of others he is going to consume to reproduce himself as an individual organ of that process of social metabolism. What is this from the point of view of each individual organ, how does each individual organ know that it is so with respect to the general unit, and therefore what concrete useful work is it going to do? I look at societies where bonds of personal dependence govern and it seems to me that this is a condition that one has as a person. I look at the capitalist mode of production and say: it is a society of free individuals (there are no bonds of personal dependence). So how is unity established? It is established in the simplest determination, in which each member of society carries in his person a quota of the total labor power of society to work for others not assigned under a specific determinate form, and each one assigns it privately and independently. Once production is finished, it must be recognized whether this was applied in a socially useful way or not. Since there are no bonds of personal dependence, the only way to establish this recognition is to represent that quota of abstract labor power/labor: if it is applied in a concrete way that is socially useful, it is represented as value: this is value.

I am not arguing about subjective or objective theory, but: this is the unfolding of what value is. So, then I can synthesize it by saying that it is the SNALdPaI, but I cannot begin by stating it because then I mutilated the fundamentals and turned it

into a concept. […] For all these reasons, it is the criticism of the question of the use of the term "concept". When we looked at Marxist political economy, everyone posed: this is a problem of concepts, what we have to do is to "build" a concept of abstract labor... And Marx mocks the German professors who believe that everything is to discuss concepts, to divide them... And it has this reference to Wagner. In the Austrian School it is fashionable. In Menger, who is its founder, there is the problem of whether or not the concept of value can be separated from that of use value, whether when one arrives at the concept of use value one has the concept of value... That is why I think it is essential to put these proposals up for discussion. I could not have cited them and moved on, but since they are problems that make up the method, the form of the production of the form of consciousness...

This is also how *I* look at it. Marx arrived at the development that he did through a process of development of his consciousness, which in its form is very different from the development of our general consciousness, of all of us who are here. We come with training in logical representation. I had a very strictly formal training: I studied logic in high school, in college... Now I think it is much more diluted, so it is more difficult to face formal logic because one does not have the foundations. Marx does not come from that world. One is confronted with questions that for Marx are answered much earlier because one is formed earlier in another form of thought. And also with all the ideological development that logic has in the middle, from going from being the full form of objective knowledge that was going to transform the whole world, to being a contradiction in terms, the proof that shows that objectively it cannot be known (this is more recent). So anything that provokes to start looking at this as a construction of concepts and so on, I object.

We have to put an end to the world's money. Marx is going to analyze that transactions are made in gold and silver. Where do they flow from? From countries where they are produced, then they are dumped into the world market, that's where the D-world enters circulation. Countries need to have a treasure that allows them to operate in the world market, which has to be in the form of gold and silver because that is what circulates there. When you look at money on the world market, it doesn't have any of these forms, it doesn't circulate gold and silver.

It is not even today: in 1825, when the state in Argentina[92] takes its first foreign public debt, it is not denominated in quantities of gold, but in £ (which have a certain gold content): they have the name of a national currency. When that arrives in Argentina (beyond the concrete vicissitudes), a part of it does not arrive in pounds, but in promises of payment from English and Brazilian merchants that the Argentine state is going to make. When you keep looking at it, what you find is that everything you looked at about national uniforms and national conditions, in the world market they are all turned upside down. And in some internal spheres of circulation in particular (the Argentine one is one) it is turned upside down: the sign of value that has forced tender is not accepted in certain transactions, and one of another national state without forced tender is set as a condition for carrying out those transactions. So we are faced with this problem.

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[92] Founded on July 9, 1816

§2. THE TRANSFORMATION OF MONEY INTO CAPITAL

Chapter IV. Transformation of money into capital

1. The general formula of capital.

We were looking at the general form that the cyclical movement of capital takes. We have seen[93] that the purpose for which the movement is set in motion does not include the production of use-values for the capitalist, that the capitalist is therefore not the subject of this movement but is capital. What we have before us is a social relation, a way of organizing the process of life of society, which has an objectified existence, which is set in motion with the immediate purpose of multiplying itself. Marx goes on to synthesize this by saying that capital acts as the concrete subject of the process of social metabolism that is governing.

Where if up to now we had people who were alienated in the product of their labor, in their commodity, here what we find is a social relationship that began with the production of use values for human life mediated by the production of value, and then we saw that the purpose was the production of the general social relationship to take it out of the place where that relationship is exercised [hoarding]. Later, with money as a means of payment, we saw that the role played by the commodity is that it is produced no longer to have a use value but with the purpose of accessing the general social relationship as a means of payment, but now put into circulation, where that social relationship is exercised. Now what we have is the opening of the movement of this objectified social relation that opens and closes its cycle in order to value itself, and acts accordingly as the immediate subject of this process of organizing human life.

We had yet to see in section 1 of chapter IV. In this metamorphosis that capital follows, what we are going to find is that, since it is a value that is valorized, there is no qualitative difference between the starting point and the point of arrival other than a quantitative difference: the necessary expression of this determination of capital is money, the existence of value in its purity as exchange value. But at the same time what we had is that here, since the money cycle begins with money and ends with money and has its expression as a value that is valued without qualitative difference in the movement of money, M cannot be converted into capital if it does not pass through the form C: it was M-C-M'. So, what we can observe at this point (Marx does not yet make it explicit), is that if there is some quality proper to capital outside of its determination as a quantitative difference,

[93] **Editor's warning**: The *appearance* of an abrupt start that references things that did not appear in session 25 or before (capital as a subject...) *it could* be because the session planned for 20/10/2022 would have been held —which either was not recorded, or if it was, it was not uploaded to the Drive—, or because the content was discussed in this session before having started recording, or they discussed it in the workshop's WhatsApp group. Or none of the above.

that quality must be sought where it takes the form of commodities. In the movement of money itself one cannot find the quality by which capital is able to valorize itself. It can only go and look for it in the commodity form that money necessarily takes in order to function as capital.

Once all this development has been done, Marx will arrive at a synthesis of the unfolding of determinations and will define capital by saying: it seems to maintain a private relationship with itself, as a value that is valorized, and consequently, this value capable of multiplying itself is capital. The general expression of capital, as it presents itself in circulation, is this which we begin by looking at as M-C-M'. And there we have this deployment.

There was discussion last time about this condition of a social relationship that is the subject of its own movement. This means: a way of organizing social life that has an objectified existence that sets in motion the process of social metabolism with the immediate purpose of multiplying itself, that is, of multiplying its capacity to set in motion the process of social metabolism (so far, without further specificity). It is an existence that presents itself as an automatic way of organizing human life that has as its immediate purpose not the satisfaction of the process of human life but the multiplication of the capacity to develop this process of human social metabolism.

Javiera: Can we go a little into this "automatic" thing?

JIC: I use the term "automatic" in this sense. Here people act as personifications. We enter into this organization of the process of social metabolism as consciousnesses and wills that are carriers of the movement of the social relationship (in this case capital). What we find is: we enter into this to produce our life, but the production of our life is not the immediate object of the movement of the social relation, but that we multiply the capacity of that social relation to set in motion the process of social metabolism as something that cannot be controlled, because the consciousness and the will that personifies it is not external to that movement but the bearer of that movement. It is a concrete way in which this movement is carried out. In this sense, the term of an autonomous movement appears, with an automatic character with respect to human subjectivity.

Ignacio: With this definition, don't you end up destroying all those definitions of an intriguist nature, such as "monopolistic actions of capital" and all that in the determination of regional economies, for example, and their relationship with international capital?

JIC: I wouldn't go to such a specific form because it involves a series of developments that we don't have so far. Here there is no will or conscience that is alien, external to this social relationship. What you were proposing would sound to me like what one could frame in a conspiracy theory. There is no conspiracy of subjects who are not bearers of this social relationship. What we know so far about this social relation is that in it all the determinations that we have displayed so far of the relations between personifications are all antagonistic relations. In this antagonism, the possibility of conspiracy does not yet appear, because it would

imply conspiring between antagonists. Up to this point there are no differences between the owners of commodities. It would not be possible to conspire with others because one has antagonistic relations with others. But if one of the possible forms of development of the antagonistic relationship were cooperation to compete with others who are outside the relationship of cooperation and not that the latter replaces the antagonistic relationship (because it is the universal relationship proper to personifications), there would be room for conspiracy.

One has to wonder about the strength of this conspiracy in determining these personifications as concrete forms that carry the general social relation. What we have already seen in commodity producers is that the relationship indirectly established through commodities is what determines consciousness as personifications. If there is any possibility of a social relation which could be imposed on it externally, we should have found it before the commodity relation, but what we find is that this is the simplest form of the general social relation in the capitalist mode of production, and consequently all the concrete forms of relations between personifications are concrete forms of this general social relation. no matter how antagonistic they may appear with respect to that same social relationship. Otherwise, we would have had to find a more general social relation than this one of which this would be the form.

We talk little about personal ties, but it is clear that in the capitalist mode of production they subsist. But when one looks at them more closely, the bonds of personal dependence become concrete forms of the general social relation. If in historical development this objectified social relation springs from a world of bonds of personal dependence, as this form advances and becomes the general social form, the bonds of personal dependence are turned upside down. From the outset, what one has is the capitalist mode of production, which when one begins to look at it does not contain, it manifests, immediately... When we explained why socially necessary abstract labour, when it is privately and independently materialised in its product, is represented as its value and takes the social form of a commodity, we put it forward by saying: in contrast to societies where there are bonds of general dependence of any kind, which precede the implementation of social labour, In the capitalist mode of production where social labour is done privately, at the moment when the commodity producers have to set in motion each cycle of the process of social metabolism, there is no social bond between them other than the fact that in the person of each there is a quota of the total labour power of society not signed in a concrete useful form determined. Each one assigns privately and independently what concrete form he is going to give to his quota of labor power, and consequently production is set in motion... well, and it goes on.

When we begin to look at capital in this chapter, what we already have in front of us is that in reality this is not the case in the capitalist mode of production: if when we started we said that there is no social relation that precedes the implementation of social labour, now what we see is that there is an objectified social relation that precedes it, that exists previously. The concrete form does not render the abstract form invalid. What the dialectical method says is: I can only arrive at this concrete form because I started from that abstract form, and now

what I see is that if I had stopped at the abstract form of the first chapter I would have been wrong, because I am the bearer of a social relation as a personification that precedes the beginning of the process of social metabolism.

Basically, the propositions that there are free wills, alien, external to the capitalist mode of production, when what we see is that free consciousness is proper to the owner of commodities and commodities are the general form that the product of labor takes in the capitalist mode of production, extrapolate what is proper to the producers of commodities to individuals who put themselves outside, in an absolute externality with respect to the determination of the conscience and self-will of free individuals.

[Replying to the chat] No, legal and political forms are not bonds of personal dependence. We saw that the contract for the sale of commodities is a legal relationship. I leave the policies because we are going to look at it later where they appear fully. One enters into such relations as personification: the contract can only be signed by a free individual, and one can only be a free individual if one can buy and sell. The relations of personal dependence in the capitalist mode of production *basically* (there may be others) are family relations and friendship relations. In them there are free individuals who renounce their condition as free individuals reciprocally. The relations of slavery, servitude, even community, are not recognized as valid social bonds within the capitalist mode of production. Later, forms of personal dependence bonds will appear more carefully.

Gabriel: This is commonly referred to as "quantitative" and the term doesn't end up closing for me because I understand that it is not the mere amount of something like that in the abstract and that's it, and I don't know if you mean this "quantitative determination" as an expression of qualitative determination or if you mean something else.

JIC: Marx simply says that the only thing that gives meaning to this movement is a quantitative difference. There is no qualitative difference, or the only difference there is is a quantitative difference, and consequently there is no other difference in quality: it is an amount of money, it is more money. The quality of capital is to have a quantitative difference, but it is not the quality that explains the quantitative difference. In Marx it appears directly that there is no qualitative difference between the point of departure and the point of arrival: it is money. I look at it that way, emphasizing that quantitative determination is a form of quality, but I don't stop too much to analyze the terms that come to me, it weighs on me that I'm saying something that is not like that in the text but is more expressive to me.

Thomas: We've talked about various economic theories being based on this social contract, according to which we were all free, we somehow lost that condition... Theories of sovereignty. But even this may also have to do with sick people, the mentally deranged... that in some way they are losing themselves in their will and in their consciousness because they are not understanding the freedom of being alienated in the commodity, they are not living it and in short they have another type of relationship, looking for that direct personal relationship.

It seems that there are people who have not hooked this way of relating to them and suffer. The point is that the universal relationship is antagonistic and they don't see that.

JIC: I don't know if I followed you well. We all suffer, with or without knowing that our conscience is free because we are alienated. You look at the product of your own conscious, voluntary action as something that is alien to you and dominates you, that says whether you acted socially appropriately or not, and when we move forward we're going to get to a point where it doesn't just say that, but it says whether you can act, Regardless of whether it is adequate or not, whether it can even participate in the process of social production.

I couldn't catch everything you wanted to raise. We dwelt a little on the subject of psychoanalytic theory many meetings ago, and what naturalizes suffering, guilt, anguish, which are the concrete manifestations of a consciousness that has to permanently carry the contradiction that it has to act as an absolutely free being devoid of any determination that does not spring from itself, and at the same time it is an individual organ of a process of which it is the bearer of a whole series of determinations that appear to it as if they were external. Then we also looked at it with the commodity producer: he is an individual who has to look at himself as if he were absolutely independent, and to make his absolute social interdependence emerge from this independence because his individual consumption depends on the consumption of others.

Anguish is the expression of that permanent contradiction, all the time. If he is acting as if he were absolutely free, he is at fault with respect to what appears to him as his external social interdependence, and if he thinks that he has to make an absolute social interdependence, he is at fault because he is not acting as a free individual. It is the form of free consciousness because it is alienated. And the fact of knowing oneself alienated does not mean that one is not the bearer of that contradiction: one is carrying it out all the time, only instead of looking at it as a misfortune that fell from the sky, or it is something that another individual did to me, etc., I recognize myself in my determinations as a social subject. And consequently, I can, while still doing so in that form, apply my human energy aiming at my own ends *as a historical subject*. As an *immediate subject*, I will not fail to have the consequences of being the bearer of a free conscience because it is alienated. But he can say: this is a historical form of consciousness, what do I do as a historical subject in front of it? Why can I be a carrier of the need to overcome it?

Thomas: This is the big question, the one I asked you in the first class in a way: why do I confront capital and how can I use *Capital*, and not read it.

JIC: What we have seen so far is that we are bearers of that social relationship. And the answer, linked to what I said before to Ignacio, is: precisely because one is the bearer of that social relationship, is that if that relationship contains potentialities that lead to one's own overcoming (something that has not appeared so far), the only possibility of overcoming them is because one is the bearer of that social relationship, if one were outside one could not operate on it. And that is the

other aspect that in what you raised is the question of what I do and why I can do, where does the power (if I have) to do as a historical subject come from.

2. Contradictions of the general formula.

Having arrived at the definition of capital and the generic form it has in circulation, Marx is now going to pose the "contradictions" that appear in this general formula. I'm going to put it on the outside but... I could have started by saying: but where did D' come from? But the exhibition is going to unfold it in this way. And what he is going to start proposing, is going to appear as if it were a statement that he suddenly put and a clash with what he had been deploying. He is going to say: this form that money has as capital contradicts all the laws that we propose about the commodity, value, money and circulation.

When one started, what one began to see in contrast to the circulation of commodities is that there was an inverted form of that movement. That if in the movement of commodities there were two processes of metamorphosis (C-M-C), here in the metamorphosis of capital it is M-C-M', it is not a movement in which one starts from one commodity and arrives at another qualitatively different commodity. This difference in the order in which buying and selling comes is not enough: it is necessary to explain how this difference gives a different meaning to the movement. If in the metamorphosis of commodities all the movement that took place did not imply a change in the magnitude of value, now it appears that in the metamorphosis of money as capital there is a change in the magnitude of value. But what the law of circulation says is that equivalents are exchanged in circulation, no more value can spring up in circulation than entered it. So, Marx says that this contradicts the laws of commodity exchange.

And he could go straight to the content, but he is going to pose it as if what he was going to do was... not a demonstration, but as an absurd display until we reach a point where there is only one way left. This also sometimes affects how development is taken. Precisely in Rubin, when he describes Marx's method, this appears as if this were analysis, as if it were not asking about the need that money carries that functions as capital, which allows it to multiply, to valorize, but to discard until I am left with what is repeated. And here it is a form of exposure, it is not the development of necessity.

What Marx is proposing is: let's start from what we said did not exist, which is the exchange of non-equivalents. What would happen if this happened for some to value their money? Here there are owners of commodities. And – here we go to a question of power relations – the power that some can exercise over others can only be exercised through their commodities, it is the power of their commodities. They all produce something that is a non-use-value for themselves, and they need to arrive at a use-value for themselves. Consequently, the only thing that remains of these commodity owners is that if one looks at them in one situation they are sellers (commodity possessors) and on the other side of the relationship they are buyers (money possessors). To suppose that surplus value arises from the fact that buyers pay for the commodity above value, implies saying that these commodity

owners, as long as they are sellers, have the privilege of selling at a high price. But one immediately looks at them in their double condition of buyers, and what happens is that as buyers of commodities (they all are), what each of them gains by selling more expensive is what another loses because he buys more expensive. Consequently, the possibility of valuing capital cannot be explained because it was bought cheap (or for value) and sold high (above value). If everyone has the privilege of selling high, everyone has the misfortune of buying high.

And he is going to make an observation, external to what he is proposing, which refers to why there is an awareness in society that there are those who can sell high to value their capital, it is only if someone can buy without the need to sell. Consequently, it is in a position to consume without the need to produce. For the moment this situation is inexplicable, but because in society there are those who can consume without producing, it is the existence of a class that can consume, buy, without the need to bring the product of their labor to social consumption. But it may be that there are some who are more alive[94], have as a personal, individual attribute, the ability to sell more expensive than what is bought. And there is one that is more foolish that, far from obtaining surplus value, is going to lose a part of the value. And no matter how much one tries to explain a general movement that is: every possessor of money who is going to [...][95] Converting into capital obtains surplus value. Surplus value cannot be explained by the simple movement of circulation. If equivalents are exchanged there is no surplus value, and if equivalents are not exchanged there can be no movement of more value than at the beginning.

When we look at what happened when there was a surplus or lack of a commodity, analyzing the deviations from normality, Marx says: substance of value is attached to it and substance of value escapes it. But we saw that this substance of value that is added to it comes from another side, from the commodity that if one sold above the value, another had to put the product of more abstract labor socially necessary to buy it than that which corresponded to normality and consequently the one who sold above appropriated the product of more abstract labor socially necessary. It is not that it was generated in circulation but that it is what the overpaid lost. Here we have already expressed this in the movement of capital, in circulation no new substance of value can ever be generated, there is only room for that which sprang up in production.

Then he will make a development by contrasting the historical forms of commercial capital and capital at interest with industrial capital. And what he is going to propose is: in order to answer us about the content of this basic form that capital presents in circulation, we cannot go to these two forms, but we have to go and see the modern form of capital, and it will develop it.

If it does not spring from the circulation, it must spring from somewhere else, which from the point of view of general motion is not visible. Because the place where the unity of the movement of commodities is seen is in circulation. And all you can see there is what you've seen so far. And consequently we must go to seek

[94] Cunning, clever.
[95] The recording is cut off.

determination outside of circulation, where the relation of the possessors of commodities is to their own commodities, those that belong to them. As for the question of value, we have already seen that the possessor of commodities through his labor can generate value, but not a value that multiplies, that engenders new value. Because for there to be more value there has to be more work, he has to work more, he cannot have produced an amount of value and it multiplies without the individual continuing to work.

Marx is going to synthesize this by stating that capital cannot spring from circulation, but neither in the absence of circulation, but in both at the same time. The unity of the movement of capital has to be in and out of circulation in order to explain where its valorization springs from. If we have to look for it in circulation, the movement of capital M-M is a movement of transformation of money into a commodity, but what commodities are these that allow it to function as capital? [...][96] capital has to buy the commodities it is going to buy for what they are worth (in circulation they are exchanged for equivalents). And at the end of this process, when you sell them, you have to do it for their value and yet get more value than you put in. This is what must be explained, how it is possible for money to become capital operating in and out of circulation. Then comes the third point, that of the purchase and sale of labor power.

[Answering Aristides] Marx, when he begins, says that the generalized circulation of commodities is a condition for the emergence of the movement of money as capital in the concrete determinations we are looking at. What I proposed is this: there is a clear reference to a development of a historical nature. What I planted is: people who argue in the name of Marx who present it like this: the simple production of commodities (chapters I-III) is an ideal construction to advance later on concrete forms; And other people say: there is a period in the development of the modes of production of the life of society where the general organization of social production takes the form of a simple production of commodities. So they fight, and those who say the first say that it is Engels' fault that someone says the second, who looked at it as a historical development. But in the drafts of Volume 3 Marx explicitly says that the capitalist mode of production arises from the simple production of commodities.

Further, in Chapter I he says: the development of the form of value is the development of the commodity form. And the development of the commodity form is capital, so what it is looking at is a process of historical development. And when we come to the chapter on primitive accumulation, at a certain point in the chapter Marx says: the key to the historical character of the capitalist mode of production is to be found in what happened to the commodity producer of feudal society. But then in the development that it makes, the concrete history of the capitalist mode of production is presented, and therefore the basis of its supersession. Then discussions appear between historians who say: no, because in such a place there was no independent production of commodities and capital appeared, and another answers no, because... I ask what this confronts me with.

[96] The recording is cut off.

In fact, Marx makes a development where he begins by saying: this is the commodity *of the capitalist mode of production*. And as I said, here history appears as a result, not as a display that must be exposed in order to highlight the determinations of the commodity, except in chapter II where a problem appears in the face of that. I read it and what matters to me in this development is not whether this has been the historical process or not: it is that it answers me what the commodity is today, and therefore, what I am today. If here the author, in addition to showing this, is founding that this is historical development, it is not the content that answers the questions that I ask myself. And when you reach the original accumulation for me there is a leap in development. Marx would know why he did it. But I don't have to ask myself why it jumped, but: if I see that here we go from this determination that is here to this other and there are no mediations, I have to deploy the determinations.

As for the fact that the 1st section of *Capital is* an ideal construction... No: that is the simplest determination of the actual commodity today. When I look at it, I do so first and foremost in the purity of its condition as a product of social labor done privately and independently. And the purest form of social labor done privately and independently has as a condition (not as a condition because it is the other way around, but it does not matter) private ownership of the means of production themselves. That's the simplest determination of this commodity that I'm looking at today. Later, when I unfold it, I see that what was the simplest takes concrete forms developed that are the opposite. Already looking at capital we have that: the simplest way is... Surplus value appears to spring up in circulation, but there can be no sprout of surplus value, so we have to go and find determination. In one more step, what one is going to find is that the condition for producing commodities is the opposite of what he saw when he started: not being a private owner of means of production. And I was able to discover it because I started from the simplest determination, not because I looked at the historical development of the capitalist mode of production or the comparison with other modes of production, but by deploying the powers of the simplest determination.

What we are going to see (and I don't want to anticipate it) is what happens with the *simple* circulation of commodities as we see the movement of capital. And that's going to extend to Volume 2 and 3. There is going to be a whole unfolding of what is happening with the simple circulation of commodities, and we are going to see in what form it subsists universally, but for that there is a lot to do. And when Marx looks at development within the ways that capital has to move, he is also going to look at it as a historical development *within* capitalism, which ... I have doubts too, very roughly it is clear that one can say that there is this development. But there are forms that Marx presents as the starting point of others, and in reality the fullness of that form arose when what was supposed to engender was already engendered.

And when we look now in this chapter at what we have to look at about labor power as a commodity, it will take implicitly: this individual up to this point was an independent producer of commodities and now he is a seller of labor power. From the outset it is as if his work is the same until a difference appears, this image appears that this worker is a former producer of commodities. What serves me,

what gives me a weapon, is development looking at it as: this is today, all I am looking at, are the simplest determinations of today, but they do not help me to answer the initial question of what to do, because I have to operate on concrete forms that go beyond these simpler forms.

3. Buying and selling of labor power.

Let's go ahead with the buying and selling of labor power. Here appears what I was referring to before that remark about capital having the generic form, which is M-M', but it has to pass through the commodity form in circulation; but if its valorization cannot be explained in circulation, it is in the materiality of that commodity that one has to go in search of determination, what Marx is going to advance is precisely that in money we are not going to find it. Where does the... the possibility of the multiplication of the value of capital, of the use-value of this commodity that capital buys? If we refer to the use value of the commodity, it is a question of what happens to the consumption of that commodity that capital appropriates. In order for the commodity to have as its use value the production of value, there must be something that is the product of human labor (otherwise, it cannot be a commodity), and at the same time it is a source of human labor (of value creation). This commodity must be available to capital in circulation. So what he is going to put in this is: there has to be this commodity in circulation, which is the capacity to work or labor power. And Marx is going to analyze what it is.

On the other hand, he is asking about the use value and the materiality of the use of this commodity that is labor power, the physical and spiritual attributes that are in the body, in the subjectivity of a human being, and that this human being puts into action to produce use values. But materiality is not enough: for this use-value to exist as a commodity, it must have the proper attributes that correspond to commodities, that they are value-bearers, that they are the private property of their possessor. In order for labor power to be a commodity, it cannot appear subject to bonds of personal dependence: the only social relation it can establish is this indirect relation in circulation through the exchange of commodities, and in order to be sold as a commodity, this labor power must belong to its owner. a free individual, who relates to his buyer as legally equal persons.

But in order for a commodity to be sold and re-sold, it is necessary that the possessor be able to reproduce it as such a commodity. The first condition for this is that he does not sell his labor power all together (then he could not repeat the transaction), but sell it for a while. Nor can he become a slave. He has to behave towards his commodity labour-power by selling it to the buyer for a certain time without renouncing ownership of that labour-power, although what he sells to him is the use-value of that labour-power. The second condition is: if he is a free individual who is a private owner of his labor power, why does he sell it instead of producing commodities on his own? He is obliged to sell it, because he has no means of production and needs to have means of subsistence in order to have labor power.

Marx says: it is a universal condition of the human being to consume before he can produce and to consume while he produces. To produce all these conditions, the possessor of labor power would have to have means of production to produce and means of subsistence to be able to produce himself. And Marx is going to put it ironically by saying: "In order to convert money into *capital*, the possessor of money must therefore meet the free worker on the market, among the commodities [...]"[97]. And what he is going to say is that he is a free individual in a double sense: he is not subject to the personal domination of anyone, he is the private owner of his own labor power, but he has no other commodities to sell than his labor power. Consequently, he is "free" from the means he needs to get his labor power moving on his own. Something that – and I tend to put it that way as a synthesis—... he is separated from his means of production, but also from his means of life, he is confronted as something that is alien to him, that does not belong to him. And the importance of this is something that is going to reappear unfolded later.

There is a part of the commodity market that is the labor market. The possessor of money, the capitalist, does not care why he finds this commodity in circulation. What matters to him is that these commodities are in circulation. Marx is going to make a figure there by saying: we are not interested in it either. What does happen is that what the possessor of money finds is the starting point from which we are going to advance. What Marx does observe is that, in order to work, it is necessary for the individual who works to have the means of production and means of subsistence in order to be able to start his labor power. And that in nature there are no possessors of money on the one hand and possessors of labor power on the other. Therefore, the existence that we are facing is not a product of a natural nature. Nor is it common to all forms of society. There is a historical process that has been advancing in the transformation and destruction of older forms of social organization and production and that has reached the present.

He is going to make an observation that in the process of historical development this condition has emerged. We have already regarded this condition as a concrete form of commodity production, and therefore it occurs in a society in which the generality of the products of social labour are in the form of commodities, i.e., in the capitalist mode of production. But the analysis of this development has nothing to do with the analysis of the commodity. We don't look at it historically: we look at that history as a result. Capital is going to present itself in this development where, on the one hand, the means of production and the means of living belong to the capitalist, and on the other hand, there is this doubly free worker that we are going to continue analyzing. The question is what is it that one finds in one's own present, not historical development. A historical analysis is not made, we do not care, that subject is here and we have to answer what it is. It is neither the product of the development of nature nor the unique form that has existed of the existence of human subjectivity, because this contrasts with the first condition of the possibility of the development of human labor and historical knowledge, but the answer is not in historical development: the response of historical development is to look at this present, which explains why historical development has these forms.

[97] Marx, K. (1977: 122), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

I am somewhat concerned about the expression that human anatomy is the key to the anatomy of the monkey, and not the other way around. Feudal society cannot explain to me the capitalist mode of production, but the capitalist mode of production is the key to understanding the feudal mode of production, and in fact, first there is the development of the capitalist mode of production and then there is what is proper to feudal society. This is very marked in Volume 3. Marx is going to develop (I clarify, but without content) the forms of commercial capital and capital lent at interest, whose historical form is usurious capital: first he is going to develop the determinations of commercial capital today, and finally there is going to be what commercial capital was historically, which was the opposite of what it is today. It will display the loan at interest, and at the end it will appear what it was in its historical origin. And when it looks at land rent, it will do the same: first it separates what is not capitalist development from the land, and when it ends it has a very long historical development of its historical genesis.

It is only after the determinations of capital have been deployed that one can answer with respect to the determinations that it presented in its historical development, because when it was born it was the opposite of what it is today. So if I don't know what it is today, I can hardly unfold historical development beyond an external description of the transformations. But when I know what capital is today, I can take the historical forms and explain why they were exhausted, why these forms were superseded by the more "developed" form, which is the starting point of the explanation. In the end, what appears is why this was generated, but it can only be explained by the fullness of the potentialities of those previous forms, which until then were not manifest. In this sense, it is the question of why we are always looking at the present and not at the historical genesis of the present. It is the unity of the dialectical method. It causes me a concern: one has to operate only on things that exist as powers and that one knows as powers, and the problem is to discover where historical development is heading by looking at "the anatomy of the ape" [...][98].

[II]

Alejo: I have a confusion. You commented that the object of the social relationship as capital is not to produce use values for human life, but to further increase the capacity of this social relation to set in motion the process of human social metabolism. The confusion comes to me that the process of social metabolism does not have to do with the reproduction of human life and the accumulation of capital is to use that capacity to set in motion the process of human social metabolism, if it is not at the same time oriented to the reproduction of human life.

JIC: [...] The simplest content is that this is a production of use values like any other. The peculiarity of it is that the concrete form in which it is governed, being

[98] I will jump to the last questions, about logical representation and how it owes to its own limitations to be the universal form of objective consciousness in the capitalist mode of production.

as its content the production of use values for human beings, is that the immediate objective is not the production of use values for human beings. That is the contradiction that this way in which we organize our life process entails: we have to produce use values in order to reproduce ourselves as human beings, but when we set to work we do so not having as an immediate condition, as the axis of production, the production of those use values, but we do it by governing ourselves through the movement of capital. where the immediate purpose is the multiplication of capital. This is a contradiction: it is human life in the concrete form of the negation of human life. The "essential" subject is always the human being, the ways in which he organizes his life process mean that the immediate purpose is not the reproduction of that human being. When we continue to move forward we will see to what extent it is not.

Javiera: I was reading section 2 again, "Contradictions of the general formula", and I was left with the doubt of... For he says that "the form of circulation, in which money comes out of the chrysalis converted into capital, contradicts all the laws set forth above concerning the nature of the commodity, of value, of money, and of circulation itself." There I wondered if by "contradicts" he means because, in the previous development, what we had been seeing is that it is based on the basis that what enters the exchange are equivalent things, is that what he means, or is there something else?

JIC: No, no, it is: labor is what generates value, and more value appears to sprout in circulation. Money is a mass of value, and here money is a value that is valorized. In circulation equivalents are exchanged, and a difference in value appears from circulation. That is why it is a movement that appears to contradict what one was seeing, it does the opposite of what one knew. It would appear as if it is not like that directly. Money acts as a general equivalent because it is a commodity and therefore has value, and now it turns out that it seems to have the ability to multiply its value simply by the movement of circulation.

I don't know why Marx used it or liked to use it, but I think that this form of exposition is linked to what I said last time, that many times exposition has the form of the unity of the dialectical method, which begins again with an immediate observation, "this is how it is presented", and analysis comes, where what has been known before is already recognized, and then the deployment has just begun. And with that form of exposure... he uses it in this figure because he looks at the immediate thing: money as capital in circulation. The analysis begins, but at that point he says: but this is the opposite of what we have been seeing so far.

And there are those who see that in Marx's development, when he says that what we knew contradicts all this, and they say: is he acknowledging that the development he had been doing is wrong? In logical representation, if the concrete form contradicts the simpler form, then the logical conclusion is: the simplest form is either false, or trivial, or redundant and played no role, the concrete form did. And here the content that Marx puts into play is the opposite. In the third section of the chapter he says: in order for there to be more value it must spring from labour, and in order for labour to be put into operation, if the movement is M-C-M', then there must be a commodity whose use-value is to produce more value than it

costs: then labour-power must exist as commodities. What are the conditions?... This chapter is quite an analytical process.

The answer to all this is not in this chapter, in the V and VI he unfolds them. It is a form of exposition that has the richness of showing the unity of the dialectical method. For me it has the disadvantage that it cuts off the flow of the development of the advance towards concrete forms (then it reconstructs it, but immediately cuts it off), it gives the exhibition for those who are not willing to look at unity, the aspect of... Fragments, thematic units: first the thematic unit of the commodity, then we move on to capital, then to the working day as a commodity... When, in reality, there is a continuous flow. That is why I emphasized. It is set by Marx when he looks at the functions of money.

Then he does not synthesize it at the end of the chapter, but it appears how the character of the social relation changes, the immediate object of social production from being a production of use values mediated by the production of value, to being a production of value to retain value, to being a production of value to put money into circulation. What does money do? He buys commodities (that's what follows when Chapter IV comes). And then, what's next? What does he do with those commodities? It does not take them out of circulation simply to bring them into the sphere of consumption, but to return this commodity to circulation in the form of money, transforming it into more money. And that's where all the development flows. And sometimes it lends itself to the fractionation and sometimes to the bad faith of saying that he recognized that he was wrong, that what he has been developing so far is invalid.

Let's go to the step that Marx continues to take in analysis. Here it has already been answered what is the condition for labor power (the ability to work) to exist as a commodity: that its owner is a free individual, has private property over his labor power, therefore he can only sell it for certain times. And the second condition is that he has neither the means of production nor the living to be able to start producing commodities on his own, and in this sense that he is doubly free.

At this point, Marx asks: if this is a commodity, like every commodity, it has value. And consequently, the question is how the value of labor power is determined. And here what he is going to say is: like any commodity, it is determined by the labor time necessary to produce it, and consequently, to be able to put this commodity back into circulation. And consequently, as value, labor power is the materialization of a certain amount of average social labor, done under normal conditions. Labor power is in the body of the worker, a living being that needs to consume a certain amount of means of subsistence. Consequently, the value of labor power will be determined by the value of these means of subsistence necessary for the subsistence and reproduction of the worker.

Here is going to appear some of the development that I think it is necessary to specify. So far the reference is to necessary means of life, to normal social labor materialized in that labor force. But in the exposition itself the specific determination of the commodity is lacking, which is to be the product of the

SNALdPaI. Here it is not explicit. There is a place where an indirect reference appears. But it is not explicit and this has given rise to a series of proposals and discussions regarding what work it is about. I always stop, beyond what is stated in the text, in the analysis of what it is that determines the value of labor power.

When the worker works for himself, he is materializing in the product a certain amount of labor. Is that work part of the value of your labor power? No, because that is not social labor, but simply individual work. He does not have to govern it by establishing a social bond with the producer because he establishes it with himself. It is not mediated by any type of need to be governed through a bond that involves social labor. Social labor is that which an individual does by spending his body so that another individual has the product of that work. It does not have the attributes of a value-producing job.

The next job is the one done by another member of the worker family so that the worker has labor power to sell. The question again is: is it part of the value of the labor power of the one who is going to sell it? It is not mediated by exchange because it is a social labor that is governed by bonds of personal dependence. And consequently, it does not have the determinations that correspond to value-producing labor. It is social labor, but it is not private labor. It is directly organized labor, and therefore it is not part of the value of the labor power that is going to be sold. If one thought that it had value, one would have to explain how a work that is not private with respect to those who are going to consume its product produces value.

This has a series of questions in the middle (I don't know whether to stop), because for classical and neoclassical economics (and Austrian economics, which is neoclassical no matter how much they beat their chests saying no, because their foundation is that value is given by utility and scarcity), they cannot explain this condition because for this it is necessary to distinguish what is immediately social labor from social labor done privately and independent. This will have a series of reflections on the techniques of recording national or social accounts. Historically, it appears under the figure of the housewife.

I attribute it to Keynes (but it is not Keynes, I lost the reference), but when they start the national accounts as a result of the crisis of the 30s, when they begin to record the movement of the total capital of society, they ask themselves what has to be recorded and what does not and they cannot explain why the work of housewives is not part of the value product of society[99]. The synthesis of this is what I attribute to Keynes, is: if all English gentlemen married their housekeepers, England's GDP would decrease because housekeepers are registered because they work privately, and housewives are not because they do not work privately. And political economy cannot account for this.

And what now appears the other way around is the proposition that it does have to produce value. And it does not meet the condition to produce value. It is not a problem of a moral nature. It is a social relationship that has a historical

[99] This approach is presented by JIC at the end of the first section of chapter I of his book *Knowing Capital Today. Critically Using* Capital; pp. 9-10 of the 2nd expanded edition.

character, that in the very development of the capitalist mode of production, next year we are going to stop at the transformations that occur with respect to the bonds of personal dependence within the working family in particular, but that work that determines the value of labor power is not part of it.

We are going to take a step further. In order not to forget, I put it forward (later we will look at it in detail). The only labor that goes into determining the value of labor power is first the commodities that the seller of labor power needs to consume in order to have labor power to sell. Then we will see that it includes the entire working family, including those who work within the working family so that other members of the family have a labor force. What is going to appear there is the normal condition of reproduction of labor power.

What if capital paid something to members of the working family who are not direct sellers of labor power but who work so that other members have labor power to sell? That working family would receive more value than is necessary to reproduce the labor power it has to sell. Consequently, the price of the labor power of family members who are direct sellers of labor power would decrease and compensate for the payment to those who are not themselves sellers of labor power but who work to produce it. The working-class family would continue to receive the same mass of value as before.

We have to consider that the general social relation is between free individuals who are alienated in their commodities. The person who does not sell commodities on his own account (whether labor power or commodities in general), who does not participate directly in the general social relationship, suffers a double alienation. Because it is personally subject, it is not free with respect to the general social bond, it is subject to another free person because it is alienated in the general social bond. Not being able to directly access the general social bond implies this double alienation. It is alien to the general social bond, it is tied to the mediation of the exercise of the general social bond by another person in order to participate in it. So that other to whom one is subject has the power to deny me the means of living in general.

It is only with the development of the capitalist mode of production, in which the commodity becomes the general form of the product, that free individuals emerge. So one has to see in the historical development how the bonds of personal dependence are dissolved, and consequently what happens to individuals who have not dissolved the bonds of personal dependence. The capitalist mode of production dissolves them in a very rapid way from the point of view of the historical process. From the point of view of the person who suffers from the bonds of personal dependence, it seems like an eternal process, which will never reach the fullness of its development. We have to look at it, when we arrive, from these two points of view. […]

[Responding to a comment on productive or value-generating work in relation to domestic work that is seen as denying the "value" of that work, and a question about what Federici says about Marx not dealing with the issue of domestic work, and why he did not have that need.] When you talk about *productive labor*, you

have to distinguish. So far we know that from the point of view of the satisfaction of human needs, work is productive if it produces use values. The work that is in question here is productive labor from this point of view, it is social labor because it produces use values for another. We have taken a step here: but in the capitalist mode of production, for the general social relation, in what we know so far, it is not enough to produce use-values for others. Only labor that produces value is productive. When you talk about whether you are productive or not, the first thing you have to consider is: with respect to what? The work you do for yourself is productive, but it's not social labor. Later on we are going to see what happens with a certain work that is in appearance, or in its concrete form, simply individual, what we are going to see is that it is not simply individual.

Marx in *Capital* is going to talk about women's work outside the bonds of personal dependence, he is going to subject it to a certain historical condition that we are going to stop and look at beyond what Marx develops, because we have before us a development of concrete forms that has an abyss of difference with respect to what Marx could see. One must remember that in Marx's time women had not long since become free individuals. We saw [private] legal relationships: buying and selling. Before, they could not sell their own labor power, when adult males already could. This situation of personal dependency even extended to that sale.

Marx is going to observe that. But when one looks at it, in his time not even adult male workers were free individuals for *political* relations (public legal relations), they were not citizens, to be so one had to have property. And the struggle of Chartism in the mid-nineteenth century is for the amount of property that must be had so that workers could become citizens to be lowered. He is then looking even at adult males as individuals who are not free for political relations. Much less women: even though some of the men, especially non-workers, were citizens and owned property, the women of the bourgeoisie were not citizens.

Marx is facing this situation. He has an explanation of why the adult male is the seller of labor power par excellence, which he himself proposes at a certain point in the development that now the entire working family, adult men and women and children, have become sellers of labor power. In a society where at the same time this appears as a destruction of the conditions of reproduction of the working population, where laws have to appear to restrict child labor and regulate women's work, prior to Marx's writing (1830-40). So unfold this, but our development goes far beyond that. When one looks at it as a historical subject, it is a fulminant development. When one looks at it as a subject who undergoes the process, who is the bearer of the process, it seems that certain determinations are never fully overcome.

Here is another thing that must be looked at, which is used to attack Marx. Instead of looking at and asking about the determinations of the commodity and therefore of the capitalist mode of production, it serves to say: ah well, then I resolve that this is so without any other basis than that it seems to me to be so. You

have to think that Marx was a doctor of philosophy or law (it's half undefined[100]) of the mid-nineteenth century, with all the prejudices of being that subject, who has the enormous capacity to go over his prejudices and be able to answer what this new historical subject that he is looking at (the working class) is and to be able to unfold the determinations of the consciousness of the working class as a historical subject. *Capital is* that consciousness which looks at itself not being Marx's consciousness immediately owned, because he was not a member of the working class. Then references of a racist nature will appear in the text and in the letters, etc. One has to look at the development and found the criticism, not simply take the expressions.

The expert on Marx's biography is Luis Denari, who is writing a biography that is very focused precisely on what he is as a subject and what he is [...] production of consciousness. There is a biographer of Marx from many decades ago, which I read when I was almost a child, he was in the family library, and his work is called *The Red Prussian*, which from the outset shows... And the author tries to show all the most negative facets that it can have, and he took care to work with the letters of Marx and Engels for this. There are two aspects of this, one (the lightest) is when Lasalle (the head of the other line within German social democracy) died in a duel, and one reads the letters and they are: yes, it's too bad that Lasalle died, but now that the dog died, the rabies is over and we move on. And the other is more serious: Engels' companion had just died, and Marx has no better answer to the only bitter letter that Engels sends him than to ask him to give him money for his daughter's piano lessons. And he then apologizes to her. You can't ask him not to be what he is, and especially you can't disqualify him for what he is. Let's look at what he developed, subject it to criticism and see if that criticism holds up or not.

If someone tells me that the work that is done with bonds of personal dependence produces value, then I have to say that when a mother breastfeeds her child it produces value, and there is a naturalization of this social relationship. Who wants to naturalize it? Someone who needs to empty freedom of its content of alienation, because if the production of value is natural, free consciousness is a natural attribute, it is not alienated. When one looks at it in its historical development, it only springs up as a form of alienated consciousness. Politically, what is personified when one wants to erase that free consciousness has alienated consciousness as its content? Or why at a certain historical moment does this type of naturalization emerge in a significant way, but at the same time the historical subject is being looked at as the bearer of the productive forces and therefore we have to look at what happens with the materiality of work, and at a certain stage of historical development this is turned around and it is said: "Abstract labor has no material character, so let's not look at the materiality of the labor process, what is specific in the capitalist mode of production is abstract labor, not private labor"? And it follows that consciousness is free by nature. These are the questions that I ask myself as an expression of a historical subjectivity, why is it necessary to erase the specifics of private labor?

[100] Not really: his father wanted him to study law, like him, but Marx dropped out and studied philosophy.

I make a clarification: since in discussions about domestic work the question of valorization is at stake... When I did the 2nd edition of *Knowing Capital Today*, I raised: the discussion on work within the home and the production of value, appears closely linked to the question not of the production of value but of the valorization of value. Therefore, to discuss it, one has to wait for the fullness of valorization. I did leave, in the general part of development, what labor is a producer of value [...], only private labor (which presupposes that it is social, one cannot work privately for oneself).

We had to reproduce the body, the person of whom he is going to apply his labor power. Up to this point the individual character simply appeared: it was the reproduction of the individual who works. It is spent and it must be replaced, after having worked you have to have these means of living to be in a position to return to work. I skip the order in order to be able to take it all together later: what is going to appear is that the possessor of labor power is a mortal being, he has to replace labor power because it is absolutely exhausted by his death, and what is going to appear is that the value of the labor power of a generation includes the means of life that the children of the working family need to consume in order to have a workforce in the future.

What is going to appear is: in order to be in a position to work one must learn to work, and consequently what is expended not from the work that the individual does to learn to work, but what is spent on educating the individual, is part of the value of labor power. In the current labor force the expenses are insignificant, because the working population that Marx is looking at does not go through any schooling, the English population in 1820 had 2 years of schooling, and by Marx's time 3 years if I am not mistaken. And Marx will later explain why schooling develops. But it is the contrast with what we have in front of us.

I clarify it so that it does not seem mysterious. We have already looked at complex labor—the application of a labor-power in the formation of which the bearer of that labor-power has had to work to produce himself in an extraordinary way. And there is a work that seems individual, because it is the expenditure that the individual made to produce himself, but which is really social labor because he was producing himself *to produce commodities.* In order to produce this special commodity, which needed this process of development of labor power, he had to work harder than the others.

In a society where the unit of social production and consumption is established through bonds of personal dependence, if someone has to devote more time to training his labor force for special work, society allocates to him the means of living he needs beyond the general time. In the capitalist mode of production, even in the production of simple commodities, the work that an individual has to do to learn to work, which is common to all, is automatically compensated because everyone had to do it, so it is not added to the value of the product he makes, it is not necessary to add it. But the only way that the individual who was an abnormally long time or who had to make an abnormally intense expenditure of his body to form himself as a worker who has a peculiar attribute, in that case, can come to have the means of subsistence necessary to reproduce himself at the time

when he did not yet have commodities to sell, that is the additional value that *complex work produces*.

We have to clearly differentiate the work that one does to produce oneself as an individual with labor power, the work of apprenticeship, and the social labor of other individuals privately so that this individual has labor power, which is part of the value of labor power but not of the value of the product of labor. The work that the individual does in his process of training to have labor power, if it is extraordinary, is not part of the value of his labor power, but of the value of the product of his labor.

Marx is going to make a remark later that one can take as general, but which is not simply valid. Marx is going to propose that the worker who does complex work produces more value and consequently values capital more, but he proposes that this will be compensated because his labor power will be more expensive, because it was necessary to work more socially privately to produce that individual with these attributes. And that has led to the confusion that the two things are the same, and to discussions saying: in complex work what determines complexity is the expenditure of learning, the work that the other did for one to learn, and then the fact that this individual did complex work. And he doesn't show up either. That is in the value of labor power if this individual could not sell his commodity but had to continue eating, in the value of the labor power of the previous generation has to be the food that this individual has to consume the most time.

All this reappears later but I think it is important to clarify it because it is closely linked to a mixture of proposals [...].

[Javiera's question about the difference between the work one does learning and that of the one who teaches].

On the one hand, there is the expenditure that one makes studying (conscious and voluntary expenditure of labor power that aims to produce one's own labor power): it is not part of the value of the individual's labor power but it is part of the value of what that individual produces *if that education was abnormally long*. If the job is to lift weights that no other human being can spontaneously lift: he has been spending his body productively in an extraordinary way to produce himself, it is not only what we call the "educational process". So it will produce more value because to that immediate work you will have to add the work you did before, because only if you did that extraordinary work can you do that work.

And on the other hand there is the work that other individuals did for him to learn. It doesn't matter if it's extraordinary or not. If it is, it goes further, because it must be added that in order for it to have developed that extraordinary ability, other individuals have spent more time working for it to acquire it. But even if it is general knowledge, if that knowledge is developed on the basis of social labor done in a private and independent way that develops in this way, even under the forms that seem not, but deep down contain that, that is part of the value of that individual's labor power.

If one sees it immediately with education. Here there are strong national deformations: I learned from Chileans and now I am careful when I say "public education", because I know that it is not free. But let's put it like this: where primary education is not free, it has to be paid for and it has to be part of the value of the labor force of the parents of the children. If the normal thing is to have completed primary and secondary school, then all that education has to be in the value of the parents' labor power. So then it becomes part of the value of this individual's labor power, because in turn he will have to support future workers who have to have this, so he runs away.

Let's suppose that the average, the normal, is primary school, and there is an individual who has a university education. The value of his labor power has added that he had to pay (if it is paid it is seen immediately) primary, secondary and university education, and then in the value of that labor power it has to be included in the parents, but then it is going to be projected (that is why free public education has another character, it is projected in another way). The value of that individual's labor power is greater because he has more educational work done by others inside, but he *also* did more work to have this complex labor power and consequently he will produce more value, in his person he has accumulated a quantity of labor that now has to be materialized in commodities.

There is another aspect that is going to be very problematic: if the value of commodities changes, the value of labor power changes. And he will distinguish between means of life that are consumed daily and must be replaced immediately and means of life whose use value is consumed gradually and must be replaced more periodically; And the result of this is that if one takes the average, what that labor force costs per year, for example, there is a basket of products that constitutes how much the working family needs every day to be able to reproduce. Under these normal conditions, the commodities "indispensable" to cover these average needs each day contain 6 hours of social labor (private and independent), and the working day is 12 hours. Then the value of the labor power of a day corresponds to the product of 1/2 of the labor day. As it is represented in the product of 1/2 day as value, and it is going to take thalers or shillings as a unit of value, it will always consider that the value is expressed in quantities of money, that it is paid in gold enclosed under the monetary name, and then 3 shillings or 1 thaler is going to be the price, that is, the value[101] of each day of labor power, and it is going to sell its labor power for its value, capital is going to pay it for its value.

There are two observations in two different places where Marx is going to refer to the determinations of the magnitude of the value of labor power. Up to this point nothing has been developed with regard to the worker except the analytical process which shows him as a private possessor of labour power who needs to sell it and a consumer of commodities. But how many commodities does it need to consume? What you need to replicate your workforce when it's exhausted. How much is that? So far we have not seen any determination to tell us. What Marx is going to take are 2 developments around this.

[101] Because we take it in its purity, as if the price were equal to the value, although we know that its normal concrete movement is permanent deviation.

He is going to make a reference to what are the needs that he has to replace in his normal state, and he says: "the natural needs: food, clothing, heating, housing, etc., vary according to the conditions of the climate and the other natural conditions of each country." And so far it is a determination that is not deployed, but enunciated: it depends on this, if it is colder he will need more shelter, but he does not say how much he needs. And now comes the volume:

> [...] *The volume of so-called natural needs*, as well as the manner in which they are satisfied, are in themselves a *historical product* , which therefore depends to a large extent on the level of culture of a country, and above all, among other things, on the conditions, habits, and requirements under which the class of free workers has been formed[102].

Now: if we look at this, these natural needs appear as a historical determination that is alien, it is history as a result, and it does not explain what the level of culture of each country depends on or why the conditions, habits and demands with which this class has been formed. It must be remembered that when he looked at this class of free workers he said: it is not the product of nature, but of historical development. And at the same time, when one looks at it, that historical development (we have already talked about it on other occasions) comes from private and independent producers: that is where these free workers have been trained. And so far the component of use-values and the magnitude of the value of labour-power appear to be externally determined: they do not spring from the movement of social production-consumption itself.

And then a reference to the determination of magnitude reappears, he says:

> The *ultimate or* minimum *limit* of the value of labor power is set by the value of that mass of commodities whose daily supply is indispensable for the possessor of labor power, for man [**JIC:** I clarify that it is for the human being], since without it he could not renew his process of life; that is, the *value of physically indispensable livelihoods*.[103]

And here the question is: what determines what is "physically indispensable"? Marx will give an example later of an individual who at that time developed a stew that provides workers with the same nutrients that they normally eat and is much cheaper. And yet, the workers are not paid a salary that corresponds to that stew, but to the misery of food they ate at the time. This kind of thing has been renewed in other forms, but it appears how to make food cheaper. I take a TV ad that says how to counterfeit meat burgers, how to "stretch" — in the terms of the food industry — put things on them that aren't the content they nominally have, but do it at home. Which is saying: at the price it would have if it were what it says it is, you could not buy it, you can only buy it if you know that they are counterfeiting what they sell you, that makes it cheap enough.

So, this "physically indispensable" thing, which later in other places will be used with the term "subsistence", which comes from classical political economy... They are going to talk about the "natural price of labor" (they don't talk about labor power). For Smith it is what the working family needs to subsist, but he says that

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[102] Marx, K. (1977: 124), *Capital* (1977: 124), Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[103] Ibid., p. 126.

sometimes it could be above subsistence, and Ricardo says plainly and plainly that the natural price of labor is what the working family needs to survive), and it cannot go on a scale less than that level; and Marx adds: "[...] since, under these conditions, it can only be maintained and developed in a *stunted way*."[104] Rickets was a widespread condition in the working population in England in the mid-nineteenth century.

Here the question is: if capital requires from the labor power of that individual a knowledge that has as a condition that he has gone through an educational process of primary, secondary and university school, where it is visibly necessary to pay for that educational process, can it be considered that the minimum has to do with a "physically indispensable"? or does that workforce not have that minimum associated? Or I put it the other way around: eating is eating different things, dressing in different ways, etc. So, this that appears as natural needs, as if they were physically quantifiable... It gives me certain reservations. This has also lent itself to a series of questions about what a worker is, what it means to sell labor power for its value or below it, which refer to these questions.

[III]

Let's end the chapter. We already have the determination of labour-power as a commodity, the doubly free condition of the labour-selling worker, and the value of that labour-power which is sold for a given period of time, which is determined by the value of the commodities which the working-class family needs to consume in order to have labour-power to sell in the present and in the future. What we were advancing is essentially that here labor power appears with its value without that value being determined by the very movement of labor power in the process of social production. The two times that there is reference to its determination, in both cases it appears as a given: labor power has a certain value. There was a condition of subsistence, we saw what can be understood by a material reproduction of human life that appears with the expression "what is physically indispensable", and the other aspect when the level of culture of a country appears externally given, the conditions, habits and demands with which the class of free workers has been formed, this historical moral element appears[105] in contrast to the rest of commodities.

The question that was not answered here is: and what do these habits and demands depend on? The determination of these conditions appears as a question that is given externally to the movement of capital itself. And the question one has is whether this expression of an abstractly historical moral element does not in turn have determinations regarding the productive attributes, the capacities that a given labor force has as a subject of the material process of production. What we have to see is whether in the development that we are going to advance, we are always going to remain in this externality (and then it seems that this historical

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[104] Ibid.

[105] The expression appears as it is in Marx, K. (1977: 124), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

moral element comes from outside), or we are going to see if what is appearing to us is that this element is the expression of the movement of capital itself and of the evolution of the materiality of the labor process in the capitalist mode of production.

[Aristides mentions that it is not clear to him about "externality".] It is not explained how this element is determined except in a way that is doubly external: first there is the enunciation: "There is this element"; second, what relationship this element has with the movement of capital itself. Because up to this point it would seem that capital only needs a labor force that is in a condition to survive. But what is subsistence? It is clear that in order to have a labor force that a literate worker needs, it is in the subsistence of the working family that the future seller of labor power can have the means for his training: he can buy the books that are necessary to be in a position to be a literate individual. So, is subsistence just eating? Or if we are talking about the production of the future labor power taking place within the working family, then it depends on what type of worker is needed, which is to survive.

So, suppose it appears: well, it is an individual who knows how to read and write because there was this historical-moral component, because he lives in a society where he learned to read and write... It is external to the movement of capital itself. And this refers to the same thing we had when we started in the first paragraph of chapter I. What did it appear? That in the society where the capitalist mode of production prevails, social wealth appears as an immense accumulation of commodities, and the commodity as its elementary form. What relationship was there between the capitalist mode of production at that point and the commodity? It was an external relationship: where it prevails, there are the commodities. When we finished Chapter I this changed substantially: now what we have before us is the simplest form of the general social relation in the capitalist mode of production because social labor is done privately and independently. There is that transition from pure exteriority (we did not even know if the commodity was a product or not) to the determination by which what we could only look at as "given" before, we can now see explained in the content of its determination. There is something that says that the worker in his subsistence has to consume books because he needs to be literate, but this is not where the movement is. Nor is it up to this point where the doubly free worker came from, the same as the capitalist: he exists, and from there we continue, at some point we have to explain the necessity of his existence.

If we look at the needs of use values, these needs still carry what appeared in Chapter I: it is a thing that by its attributes serves to satisfy human needs. And those needs spring from fantasy or from the stomach. And it is not explained why there are individuals who have certain fantasies or certain stomachs, we do not have the explanation of why this is a use value in the capitalist mode of production.

I am going to give a concrete historical example. Tobacco is a use value that deteriorates the individual who consumes it. And yet, why is it a use value? The

paco[106] is a use value. What is the need for something that destroys the individual to exist in the form of being a use value? One can say: the need for paco springs up... one could say the stomach, because the individual does not have enough to eat and then this erases him from his situation; or it springs from fantasy, because it will take him out of his reality. But why is that a use value? And this with respect to all use-values. When we say "These are the commodities that the working family needs to consume" we have so external the explanation of why that is what it needs to consume, why tobacco, alcohol, amphetamines, and other "intoxications" are use values *in this form of society*? So far there is no explanation. It is clear that they are use values that are produced privately and independently; They are not simply products of labor: they are products of capital. In this sense, when the term "moral historical" appears, it is an affirmation of an external nature. The problem with this statement is that many times it is a question of immediately explaining what the content of that is, and then the proposals appear that it depends on how much the working class fights for this, it has this consciousness, and it is a question of explaining something that is at the starting point as if in reality all the determinations were already deployed.

[...] Once the value of labor power is determined, it appears that labor power is the capacity to work, and one has to distinguish between the capacity to work and work, which is the *exercise* of the capacity to work. Marx makes the parallel with the ability to digest and digestion. In order to be able to apply labor power, it is necessary that it has been produced and that the material conditions are in place to be able to apply it, and what we saw is that the worker is separated from his means of production, these conditions are not present. In order for labor power to be converted into labor, the first step is for the worker to sell that labor power. And what the worker is going to have to do is, just as he sells the use of his labor power for a certain time, he is going to have to repeat this sale continuously, because as a living subject he needs to dispose of the use values he receives in exchange for the sale of his labor power in order to reproduce his natural life.

And so Marx is going to continue with the analysis of some specific determinations with regard to the commodity labor power. The first thing he will point out is that it is not distinguishable from other commodities, because the existence of their value precedes their existence as commodities which are thrown into circulation. Since in order to produce it he had to dispose of a certain quantity of the product of social labour performed privately and independently, value pre-exists the sale of labour-power. But in addition, in the act of selling it, where value is revealed, use-value is not yet present, in the act of exchange the transformation of labour-power into productive activity does not take place. The consumption of use-value, and therefore its existence as use-value, is then separated from the moment of alienation.

What happens to a commodity in which the purchase and sale and the actual delivery of the use value are temporarily separated? And Marx's answer is: we have already seen the function of money as a means of payment. One thing that every seller of labor power knows is that first you give up the labor power, put it to

[106] Cocaine Base Paste (PBC), a low-cost cocaine sulfate-based drug similar to crack made from cocaine residues and processed with sulfuric acid and kerosene.

work, and then you receive the value of that labor power. Consequently, in real movement, it is the capitalist's money that fulfills the function of a means of payment, because it consumes the labour-power of the worker before paying for it. Now the worker became the creditor and the capitalist the debtor. This is the real content, the workers always open credit to the capitalist.

But what matters here is what is the character of this exchange of commodities. Labor power is now at the disposal of the capitalist, it has the capacity to appropriate its use value, and in order to look at the movement in its purity, here an assumption will appear, which is to abstract from that concrete form and pose as if the content were immediately identical to the form. And then, Marx proposes to consider that the capitalist pays the worker for the labor power at the moment when the transaction occurs, to sell it. This is something that one has to take into account because later discussions have appeared within Marxist political economy that forget this starting point, then saying that Marx's approach is wrong.

It may seem, if one abstracts, that the capitalist does not need capital to buy labor power, because he first uses it, consequently he has a product, sells it, and pays the worker with that. And this is reflected, this is what neoclassical economics uses in the theory of the production function. He is going to state that labor (he does not speak of labor power) is a factor of production, and the worker's salary is not part of capital, that the worker is paid what he produced and then it is sustained on the basis of this appearance that the worker is paid after he has worked. The capitalist who is going to build buildings, if we take it as if he builds the building and sells it once he has finished, has to have in his capital the value of all the labor power he is going to use, because he will not have a commodity to sell until he finishes the construction. And in the meantime, yes, the worker opened credit for 15 days, but then the credit was closed and the commodity is not ready to sell, and another 15 days pass and the credit was closed again, etc. So this has to be taken with all these aspects. And the richness of the proposal is not simply an assumption to simplify, but shows the movement of capital in its purity, in the fullness of that value that is valorized, and that is not hidden by the appearance that it actually pays later, and then it was not in the value that it advanced.

Now the capitalist disposes of this labor power, it is his property because he bought it, but he has to consume this labor power, appropriate its use value. We must then put this labor power in the process of production of commodities and surplus value, which so far has not been explained, only the source of the possibility of that production appeared. So, the consumption of that labor power, like that of any other commodity, occurs outside circulation. It occurs, if it were a means of living, in the process of individual consumption, but in the case of a commodity that serves to produce, it is going to be consumed in a process of production.

So, he is going to make a series of figures where the first thing that will appear is that the public sphere is that of circulation, where the whole movement of that social relationship is revealed, but we have to leave this sphere and we have to enter that of production: private production. Therefore one can only enter on the basis of this link between the capitalist and the worker. And then Marx is going to

speak of the entry into the "hidden workshop" of production, and he is going to make an observation that seems to be a mere affirmation and that contains the expression of who is the subject of this process: "Here, in this workshop, we will see not only *how capital produces*[107], but also *how it produces itself*, capital",[108] and here is the affirmation that it is a subject that what it does is to produce itself. And then he says: here we are going to discover the secret of capitalist production[109].

Before doing that step, he is going to make another observation. He says: this sphere of circulation, where the buying and selling of labor power takes place, is the true kingdom of the rights of man, of what the French Revolution proclaimed. Why? Because "[...] *liberty, equality, property,* and *Bentham*"[110] (now I put why Bentham, who was not in the declaration of the rights of man by himself).

Freedom because the two subjects who are linked in this are mutually free individuals and who with their free will will will establish this relationship. They are free men and equal before the law. In the contract, as we have already seen, the link between the personifications of commodities is a direct, conscious and voluntary relationship, to which the general name of a legal relationship is given, it is a common legal expression of the two wills. Here's what it shows us. Equality because they relate to each other as owners of commodities. Each one receives and delivers an equivalent of the other, there is a change of equivalents. Property because everyone can dispose of only what is theirs. And here is one more element that Marx is not going to deploy here, but that one can contrast with something that appears much later, which is what kind of property it is about.

What is this private property based on? All we know about the capitalist mode of production is what we have seen so far about commodity production. To produce commodities one must have private ownership over one's own means of production in order to be the owner of the commodity that leads to exchange. What underlies this property is that it is a property based on one's own work. It is not explicit but if one follows the development of what we know about the property so far, it is born as a product of the work itself.

And finally, he puts Bentham, a utilitarian philosopher, where each one seeks to satisfy his own private interest, obeys a selfish impulse. So he is going to take a phrase that refers to Adam Smith and says: and when one looks at circulation, on the basis that this is the kingdom of the rights of man, what one is going to have is that since each one only cares about himself and no one is concerned with a common or general interest because it would imply taking care of the interest of others, All of them, "thanks to a *pre-established harmony of things* or under the auspices of an omniastute providence", [111]refers to the invisible hand: from this confluence of individual private interest will spring the satisfaction of the collective, social interest.

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[107] **JIC:** how it produces things that are distinct from itself.
[108] Marx, K., (1977: 128), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[109] Marx says (ibid.): "[...] the *secret of the production of surplus value*".
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid., p. 129.

In this regard, he will refer to the vulgar free trader. It is actually to the whole of political economy, but it is immediately expressive of what neoclassical and Austrian economics does, it is exactly that expression. So what one has in front of you is that this construction is not an abstract fantasy. It is based on looking at the purity of the simplest determination of the relationship between buyer and seller of labor power. It is an appearance because it is separated from its determinations, and I say "simpler" because it does not look at the concrete forms that are far from having this character in many respects. But there they go to look for explanations to judge capitalist society and wage labor. But when one looks at the capitalist and the worker in this bright light of the rights of man, it changed their appearance. The capitalist is now the one who leads and the worker is behind, one is happy and the other is reluctant. And he makes the impression that he is going to sell his own skin, knowing what awaits him: that his skin is being cured. Here ended that process of starting in circulation, leaving it, looking at what labor power is as commodities and returning to circulation in the contract of sale. But to see how capital acts as a subject, it is necessary to look at what happens in the production process. End the section there.

[Javiera's question about selfish interest and the general]. What does Adam Smith say? We cannot expect the benevolence of the baker, the brewer, the butcher to provide us with bread, beer and meat: what we must do is appeal to their personal interest and ours. This has later led to the constructions of neoclassical economics. This is what is later synthesized in homo *oeconomicus*: a rational individual who seeks to maximize his individual well-being, but knows that he has to appeal to the interest of others to satisfy it. Smith is going to put his phrase about the invisible hand much later in the development by saying something like this: the social interest is better satisfied when each one pursues purely and exclusively his personal interest than when there is someone who says that he pursues the general interest. Because in this confrontation between personal interests, it is as if there were an invisible hand through which each one pursuing nothing more than his individual interest achieves the maximum of social welfare.

Ricardo was more practical, so there is not much problem with whether this is so or not. And then it appears in the different lines of neoclassical economics and has resurfaced very strongly with the Austrian school, founded by Menger. [...] If one looks at it in this abstraction, of this change of equivalents, of this affirmation of freedom, that one is not subject to the interest of another individual and that one disposes of what is his own and nothing else of what is his, he says that there can be no conflict between individuals: general harmony springs up, no one has anything to claim from others.

Javiera: That's why on the previous page you refer to circulation as something located on the surface, right?

JIC: Exactly. That's *what you see* in the public sphere. What happens in the private sphere... Let's see what it confronts us.

[…] The chapter that follows is that: we have to look at the functioning of the workforce. We already know that more value has to spring from here, because it is the only possible source, but how is it that more value springs up? We start, then, with chapter V.

§3. PRODUCTION OF ABSOLUTE SURPLUS-VALUE

Chapter V. Labor process and valorization process

1. Labor process.

Here what you have is, again, what you had in chapter I. You started with the use value, with the material character of the thing, and unfolding the attributes of use value, because you were looking at use value, you saw that those use values in these societies are carriers of exchange value. And we are going to see that in this chapter he makes exactly the same parallel: he begins with the purity of the materiality of labor, and suddenly there is going to be a transition through a question that makes the materiality of labor, and from that transit the specific character of this process of labor as a process of valorization appears.

I make a clarification: it is going to unfold things that I put forward in my exposition with respect to the production of simple commodities, not the movement of capital. I believe that today one cannot wait until this point to establish the conditions for the materiality of human labour, because within Marxist political economy the conception is absolutely dominant that abstract labour has no material character, that it is not a material expenditure of human labour power, that it is not common to all forms of society. but it is a social form specific to the capitalist mode of production. And so, in order to be able to fully confront this, it is essential for me to make clear, when one looks at the simple production of commodities, that the problem here is how the materiality of social labor is assigned in a private and independent way. And consequently, one has to start with the materiality of the human life process. In many places the developments of aspects of materiality will appear in Marx when they reach the specifically capitalist form. […] We are going to see many things that we have already seen but here they are structured step by step.

What is he going to start with? Well, the use of labor power is labor. What does the buyer of labour-power have to do in order to dispose of the use-value of the commodity he bought? Let the salesperson get to work. So, he goes from having a potential labor power to one that is in action, here he becomes a worker and has to materialize his labor power in use values, things that serve to satisfy human needs. The production of use-values does not change the materiality of this process whether or not it is done under the command of the capitalist. So we are going to look at the materiality [of work] in its purity, abstracting from specific social forms.

Then it begins with the simplest determination of work: it is a process of exchange of substances with nature, of metabolism governed by the human individual who is going to put into operation the materiality of his own body, and he is going to apply it by operating on the materiality of the rest of nature. Marx will make the observation that he is not going to deal with the merely animal forms of human labor, instinctively organized labor. And that's where it's going to appear

with the figure of the bee and so on, is that work is a conscious and voluntary action. And the two terms are going to appear in the text that Marx is going to be developing.

He says that he does not merely change the form of natural matter, but that in that change of form he realizes his own end, and knows himself by organizing his action. He has to do so and govern his "conscious will" throughout the labor process. There is a reference to the intensity of work referring not to simple materiality, but to the fact that the more unpleasant the work is, the more attention he will have to pay attention to, and that the more the worker recognizes himself by affirming himself as a human subject in the labor process, the more pleasant it will be for him and the less effort he will have to make to concentrate on that work. So here is the activity (work), the object on which one works and the means with which one works.

It starts with the earth, unfiltered by any [previous work]... it is the general natural condition of production (including water). And on that condition the labor of the worker is going to be applied. With labor he will separate from the earth what will appear as raw materials (because they are not filtered by any previous work). The medium is differentiated from the raw material. When the raw material is the object of labor, it can then serve as a medium for another labor process. Because there are already intermediate transformations that make it no longer a simply natural object. There are potentialities in what first appeared as an object and now became a means because it is already filtered by a work to be used again, and then, in the means that are going to be used as means of work, there are potentialities of a mechanical, chemical nature, which the human being uses to achieve his end. and interposes these means between his body and the object of the work. And here is implicit a form of labor that will later be deployed, because what Marx is going to put is that the human being *wields* that means of production to operate on the object of labor. What is set as a generic condition of human work is manual work. And this is what is going to appear as a starting point.

Then, these means of production are going to become organs of human productive activity. He talks about how what distinguishes the different economic epochs is not what is done but how it is done, how the materiality of work is executed. What is it that appears so far as the labor process? It is the conscious and voluntary expenditure of the labor power applied to the means of labor so that the means of labor operates on the object of labor and transforms its use value according to the purpose pursued by the producer, by the worker. Here there is going to be a reference to the pure materiality of labor, saying: the unity between means of labor and objects of labor are the means of production, and labor is productive labor, and here appears the determination of the materiality of productive labor from the point of view of the production of use values.

It also has a historical development on the transformation of raw materials by labor processes and it will make another difference, which is: the immediate object of labor on which the tool is applied to transform it into a certain use value, and the auxiliary materials, which are not materially incorporated into the body of use value but are consumed in order to put the means of labor into operation. And then

he is going to give as an example of these things the fuel in transport: auxiliary material that allows us to satisfy the objective which is to move the thing from one place to another. The coal in the iron smelting process is auxiliary, it is mixed with the raw material, and it is distinguished from that used for lighting or heating, because there they are incorporated together with the raw material into the product. And in the chemical industry it is not possible to distinguish what is auxiliary and what is main because they all come out mixed.

A use-value can be both a product and a means of production within the same production process. Examples: coal, livestock (where this plays a significant role). There is going to be a production in process, where the raw materials, in the movement are going to be considered raw materials even if they are filtered by a previous work but for this production process it enters for the first time. We start with this, we have a product that is half-developed, and it depends on the function that the object fulfills within the process, it operates as a raw material, a means of work or a product. And here there are going to be observations about the means of production.

It comes from a process in which it is a product and now it has become a means of production. It is not simply the materialization of a previous work but serves living work. There is a disquisition about the relation between previous labour and living labour, but in order to serve as a means of production, the previous labour must have been well done, and above all something will have use-value only as a means of production on condition that the living labour which produced it in its concrete form has performed the previous operation. He has an observation that when a means of production fails, the one who is using it remembers the one who produced it, while if it is well made its condition as a product of previous labor is hidden. But now it appears the other way around: in order for the means of production to maintain their use value, living labor has to use them, if it does not consume their materiality, processes of organic, physical deterioration will appear, it decomposes.

All this is common to every process of human life, it makes the materiality of human work, and that is why we do not need to refer to anything that is specific to a historical social form, which is the difference between productive consumption and individual consumption. In both processes, the use value of the products is appropriated. But in individual consumption, this appropriation results in the reproduction of the same living subject, its product is the individual, while in productive consumption, the labor power and the use value of the means of production are consumed, and what appears is the product of a production process, what there is is a product that is different from the one that consumed the means of production. it is separate from the one who made the consumption. These are the simple, abstract, general determinations of this question. It has no difference other than the degree of development that the use of the means of production may have and the way in which the execution of the work is organized.

I want to emphasize an issue that I think is obvious to those of us who are here, but to make it clear. Because again: neoclassical economics makes an inversion that has a real basis, but that we have not seen so far, but I do want to make this

observation. The only subject of the production process is the human being. Everything else that enters into the labor process as an object of labor, a means of labor, raw material... Although they are forms of non-human living existence, they are means for human activity, they are not subjects. The land is not productive, what is productive is either the plant that is above the earth and produced itself, or in the case of the cultivated plant, the only subject of that production process is the human being who used the condition of the plant as a subject, transforming it into a means for itself. The machine is not a subject of production, it is a means for human labor. So, whatever the power of the means that human beings have to produce, they are productive powers of their labor, not of the machine. I clarify this because for neoclassical economics machines, raw materials, etc. are subjects, they are *factors* (factor = the one who makes) of production. And the land does nothing, it is a means of production.

What Marx is going to pose now is: let's look at the capitalist again. He has to take care of buying the means of production that serve for the labor process, having all the material elements that are necessary for the labor power to be applied, and he is the owner of the means of production and of the labor power of the worker who sold it to him. And now what the capitalist has to do is for the worker to consume by working the means of production (productive consumption). And again, Marx goes on to say that the materiality of labor is the same whether the worker works for himself or for the capitalist. And here there is going to be a reference to what I was talking about before, about the exteriority with which conditions appear.

Where did the worker come from with productive attributes that allow him to perform the work as he is going to do it? And what he says is: the capitalist encountered labor power as it appeared to him in circulation. And if we look at this process, what we have is: how did the labor force come if it had to take it as it came in the market? It came from the producer who produced on his own account, as we knew him, but who here is now separated from his means of production and has the productive attributes (what I call "productive subjectivity") of a simple producer of commodities. And what Marx is going to propose is: a whole period of development of the capitalist mode of production has to pass for the movement of capital itself to emerge what a worker is.

A reference appears to the *subsumption* of labor to capital: the condition of capital appears, which is ceasing to be a tricky subject: it is a subject that is setting its own conditions, that produces the worker according to what he needs. But Marx says that at this point we do not have any deployment of this, we are going to take it in the immediacy in which it appears to us and we are going to see what the labor process shows us when we now look at it mediated by the consumption of the worker's labor power governed by the capitalist. And here what is specific to labor in the capitalist mode of production will appear. I make a clarification about the term "subsumption".

In the classic edition of FCE (there I have the new one but it seems worse to me, even though Roces was happier with that one) there is the word "submission", because in Spanish there was no "subsumption", but it has a richer content than

the word "submission": it is not simply that it is subdued, but that it is inside this other thing that one is looking at. So it seems to me an advance that this word has been incorporated because this is what is at stake, it is not simply the domination of capital or the capitalist over the worker as something imposed externally, but that the worker is the product of capital, it is a moment or a form of the existence of capital. But Marx enunciates the development of this but at this point we cannot yet found it, it must be founded through the very movement of what follows.

What follows is: when one looks at this process of consumption of labor power ruled by the capitalist, the capitalist governs the work of the worker, he is the one who watches over whether this work is going to be done properly, without wasting means of production, taking care of them, with the skill that is required... This from the material point of view, where what one has is that the worker is a free individual who, unlike the one we had until now, no longer has *full control* over his individual work, he continues to have the control of a free individual because the capitalist asks him for those attributes, he asks him to have the control of a free individual. And I make a clarification because many times there are statements such as that the worker lost *all control* over his individual work: then he could not work.

If I lost all control over my individual work right now... [Babbles unintelligibly.] Is it? That would be it. Thus, the worker always retains control over his individual labor. Then we will see in the concrete ways how far that control reaches, but even the simplest, most elementary, repetitive work, the individual has to have control over what he is doing, he has to consciously and voluntarily govern what movement he is going to make so that the tool (we are looking at the work in which the tool is wielded) operates on the object of work. The free individual has productive attributes that the forced worker does not have because of his ties of personal dependence.

And I am going to add one more thing that I always add later: what do we find here in contrast to the simple producer of commodities? The simple commodity producer was the full expression of private labour, where the individual who performs the labour, the producer, has full control over his individual labour, there is no control over the social character of labour, there is no capacity to co-ordinate labour with other individuals. And what appeared here is that within private labor, the control of a free individual over the labor of another free individual appeared. For the capitalist, the work that the worker does is social labor, it is another individual who is spending his labor power. And then here it appeared that within the private character of work we discovered for the first time that there is a mutilation of that full private character, and that at the same time there appeared a social capacity to control the work of another individual, in a relationship between two free individuals. Externally, the worker's work remains private labor. Now let's see who owns the product and so on.

And so, the possibility of recognizing this movement does not arise from what follows now, which is the purpose of the movement: it is born from looking at the materiality of work. When one looks at it and the figure of the capitalist appears—and up to this point I was seeing a worker who came with the attributes of a simple

producer of commodities—he began to find what I am going to define as a development of the socialization of private labor. But within it it began to present characteristics of social labor, in which one individual spends his body productively but another individual controls that expenditure not because he has personal powers over the first, but on the basis of a relationship between two free individuals.

So what Marx is going to put is this: the other aspect that jumps out at you is that the product of labor no longer belongs to the direct producer, but to the capitalist. Why? Because it bought the worker's labor power, and it is now the private property of the capitalist. The same with the means of production. What the worker did with his work was to productively consume the means of production, and what is going to appear is that then the process of production in this form is a process of productive consumption of two objects that the capitalist bought and that belong to him. Consequently, the result of the operation between these two objects, which is the product of labour, belongs to the capitalist. And this is where Marx makes the passage to the second aspect of the double character of the capitalist production process: it is a labor process and it is a valorization process.

[Javiera asks about the appearance of this social character within private labor].

In the purity of private labor, which is work done by an isolated individual, the private owner of his means of production, disposing of what and how he is going to produce, disposing of means of production, and spending his body are attributes of the commodity producer. And here what appeared is that now it is an attribute of someone who does not make the expense of the body. One can look (Marx always leaves it very much aside, in Volume 3 something appears) if you want what is happening with the work of the capitalist. Because in order to buy labor power, to decide what is going to be produced, to decide what instruments of production and labor power are needed, etc., it implies a conscious and voluntary expenditure of the human body. And it is a materially necessary part in the execution of this form of social labor organization.

Whatever the social form is, someone has to figure out how it's going to be produced and so on. This appeared as an attribute of the commodity producer, but now it is doubled, one has that attribute and there is another individual who spends the labor power. As to do this part of the capitalist you have to work, and Marx at a certain point is going to pose it as if he works and in others he is left out, because the work that the capitalist does does not play any role in valorization itself. The capitalist can incorporate value into the product of labor that immediately appears as the product of the worker's labor, but he cannot produce surplus value because the condition was to buy a commodity whose use-value was to produce more value than it costs, and the capitalist does not buy his own labor power from himself. No matter how much he actively participates in the labor process and does tasks that are materially necessary, his work can never enter into the valorization process.

The social character that this work is highlighting... There are two individuals where before there was a need for only one, and the condition that there should be only one (who had complete control of his individual labor) is that there are two individuals fragmented in this: the worker no longer has that full control, he is mutilated in that control, but the capitalist is now deprived of the capacity to perform the work. And between the two they constitute an organ of a labor process which, from the point of view of the general organization of social labor, is a social labor done privately and independently. But within that private and independent character there begins to be a process... not of cooperation, it is clear, but that materially the two converge in the possibility of developing this labor process. Neither of you is in complete control of what you are doing, you can only work together in an asymmetrical relationship. And what is immediately visible is that one spends his body under the command of the other, the other under his own command, but he has to apply that expense to govern the work of the other. And this is a step in the socialization of private labor.

When we finish this, here we find again that what we knew until Chapter I, and which is what allowed us to get here, the concrete form it has is the opposite of what we saw in Chapter I, and it is the same production of commodities within the capitalist mode of production. only that the concrete form that this social relation takes and in which human subjects are indirectly linked has a form that is the opposite of its simplest content. Which does not make it false, it only says that that simpler content had a need that when it was made, what I see is this concrete form.

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2. Valorisation process.

From the point of view of the process of valorization, it is a question of producing more value than the material form of the means of production and labor power purchased by the capitalist had taken. And if from the material point of view the purpose of the production process was the production of a use value, the purpose from the point of view of the valorization process is the production of more value than the one expended.

Development continues on the side of the unfolding of the movement of the labor process. What we are going to have is that this labor process has to convert raw materials using the instruments of production and auxiliary materials into a certain use value. Looked at from the point of view of the value production process, what we have is that the value of raw materials enters into the value of the product. I am going to say something that is not but comes out like this: transformed into its materiality that product of the previous SNALdPaI, now has to be socially recognized again as the product of useful labor after its form has been changed, and it has to reappear in the value of the product. The condition for this value of the materials used to reappear in the value of the product is that this new product is the product of a SNALdPaI, but that it corresponds to the socially necessary labor time *to make the product*. The use-value of these means of production (raw materials, auxiliaries) is a condition that the concrete labours which have been applied to them are adequate to transform them into the new use-value. And so far

we have that living labor appeared simply by preserving the value of the means of production. But now not simply the conservation of value but the production of value is going to appear. Living labor by itself has to materialize in the product and this is what Marx is going to deal with in development.

In order for labour to be socially useful from the point of view of the materiality of the production process, it must first of all be carried out with the quality which corresponds to the production of use-value. But from the point of view of the process of value production and then valorization, what matters is simply a question of the amount of labor that is going to have been applied. So, the development that is at stake is what happens with the materialization of that amount of work in the product that is going to be made.

Until now, what we had was labor power paid for its value. Marx is going to make the deployment and reaches a point in which as the worker has been transforming his labor power into labor in activity and that labor has materialized in his product, the product of that labor contains a new substance of value that is added to the value of the means of production equivalent to the labor time that the worker has been spending. Marx then unfolds this movement of new value generation to the point at which the worker has produced a mass of value equivalent to the value of his labor power. He has worked an amount of time equivalent to the labour applied to the production of the commodities which the labourer has had to consume in order to have labour power.

Marx makes the analysis up to the point at which the worker worked a time similar to that which was spent in producing his commodity-means of subsistence. If we look at the result of this production, what we have is a mass of value materialized in the product, the sum of the value of the means of production consumed + the new value materialized by the worker's labor, which is equivalent to the value of the capital that the capitalist advanced. So at this point he is going to make these figures with respect to the capitalist's surprise because *so far he* has not been able to value his capital.

A whole series of aspects of ideological discourse appear: of the sacrifice of the capitalist, of the risk he runs (something that one hears very often today under the figure of the capitalist as an entrepreneur who has risked his capital and in the end has nothing), who has deprived himself of consuming, as vulgar economics says. Today that term has disappeared, the term that replaces it is later, incorporated by Alfred Marshall, which is that *he waits* to consume without receiving any compensation in return. The other figure that appears is: the capitalist presents himself as someone who has worked, and what does he receive in exchange for the work he has done? Nothing, because all he achieved was to restore the value of his capital. I made a clarification last time about what the capitalist can do and how Marx considers it a necessary work (of direction and organization of production) but throughout Volume 1 it is separated, the figure of the capitalist is alien to the movement of production. All he can do is produce value if his labor is socially necessary and materialized in the commodity he is going to sell. But it cannot produce surplus value. If the source of surplus-value is labour-power in the form of

a commodity, and the capitalist never sells himself his own labour-power, he can never valorise his capital.

Then Marx ends with this irony and says: in reality the capitalist already knew what it was like. And then it will unfold the *content* of the valorization of capital. So far in the example Marx had considered 1/2 of a working day: the value of labor power corresponded to 6 hours of a 12-day workday. Consequently, the labourer's working day continues, and the labourer continues to work above the part which was necessary to produce a value equivalent to the value of his labour-power, and it is in that part of the working day which extends beyond what corresponds to the value of labour-power that surplus-value arises. At the end of the full working day, the capitalist finds that he has replaced the value of the means of production and of labour-power, on the basis that a new value has been generated which is equivalent to that of this labour-power, and a new value which exceeds the initial value of capital. By productively consuming labour-power from the point of view of the valorisation process, more value has been produced than had been expended. Marx is going to put as a synthesis how it is explained that it occurs in circulation and at the same time outside circulation, is that it begins in circulation but can only be valorized outside of it, in the process of production.

Javiera: It is not clear to me how it is that the capitalist creates value. It is a surveillance task that at a certain point the worker himself is the one who does it, but I am not clear why it is productive labor and does not produce surplus value.

JIC: As soon as the capitalist *materially organizes* the labor process, that is productive labor, it is necessary labor for the development of production, *if he does that*. The work of surveillance has nothing to do with that, it arises from the antagonistic relationship between the capitalist and the worker. But let us take it in the purity of a work of organization of material labor. If that labor is necessary, the capitalist's labor is materialized in the product and is done privately and independently, it is part of the value of the product. It may be the case, as soon as the capitalist is doing work that is materially necessary to produce use-value, that this labour materialised in the value of the product is represented as value.

Let us suppose that the capitalist works alongside the worker in producing use-value, intervenes in production. His labor is part of the value of the commodity. Why can't he produce surplus value? Because the condition for producing it is to have bought labor power for its value, and the use value of that labor power is to produce more value than it costs, and the capitalist cannot buy his own labor power. He did not have to pay capital to dispose of this labour-power: he disposed of it as a commodity producer, not as a capitalist because he did not buy it, he is the private owner of his means of production, and he applied his own labour to them. It produced value that is in the value of the product.

One of the reasons why here it may be very separate, but because of the proposals that appear now it seems important to me to clarify from the outset, is that up to this point one is looking at the worker and the capitalist. What work can the capitalist do in organizing production that goes beyond setting the conditions

of production, where labor that is converted into use values does not materialize, and ordering the worker to get to work and then the management is identical with surveillance? When more complex labor processes appear, it is when an organizational work appears, which is not simply that of surveillance and the purchase of means of production and having resolved what is produced, but begins to be a condition for the development of the labor process. From the point of view of value production it is as if it were a private and independent producer, but it never has the possibility of producing more value than what something it did not sell costs.

Aristides: Would this be the work of the self-employed[112]?

JIC: That's a simple commodity producer. When we get to Volume 2 we are going to find what happens to the figure of that individual within the general movement of capital. In the value of his commodities the value of the means of production which he consumed reappears, and the labour which he himself materialized in the product represented as value appears if it is a SNALdPaI. This would be a capitalist who intervenes in a process of production that is essentially a process of valorization of capital to which he adds his individual labor from the point of view of the material need for that labor to produce use value, not of the "abstractly social" need for him to act in order for that use value to be produced. which would be the work of surveillance over the worker. Because it is clear that the individual is working at that moment but that he is not born of the need to produce use value, but is involved in the social form in which this production of use values is organized, where the direct producer (the worker) has an antagonistic relationship with the organizer of work. the capitalist, who has to coerce and monitor it.

I shouldn't, but I make this clarification because I suppose that the question arose linked to how one analyzes that subject that you were proposing just in its concrete existence in the capitalist mode of production. One of whose classic figures is that of the peasant and others. This is what one develops from this proposal that is in Volume 2: it is subsumed within the production of commodities, within the general movement, and then *it seems* that it is a capitalist, because with its means of production *it seems* that it is capital, it *seems* that what it receives is a salary to the point that in the national accounts the self-employed have a separate equivalent salary and what would be the surplus, as if their labor power had been bought. And that is valid when one wants to make the analysis of concrete forms, arriving at a whole development that we are very far away here, only that I make it clear because later in practice it appears as that figure, but *strictly* what we have so far is not that figure, it is a simple producer of commodities.

[Question about productive and unproductive labor and the capitalist's work of direction and coercion] [...] When we looked at the work of circulation, we said: it must be represented as a value if it is carried out privately and independently. When the capitalist exercises coercion, he does not exercise it as a third party privately and independently, but for himself. So, it wouldn't even appear as a social

[112] What we know in Spain as "self-employed".

labor. But they are markedly different determinations. Here I returned to a productive labor of use values for human life, not one that produces use values for circulation. But if I did... That it is not considered anywhere in Volume 1, I will put it later.

Gonzalo: I don't know if it's also getting ahead of me, but it's also the management of a company delegated by workers.

JIC: The same thing happens there: we have to see if the work done by the manager who is not the owner of capital is a work that produces value materialized in use values for human life, if it does not produce value in any way because it is work for the owner of the labor power of this individual who sold it to the capitalist. with which it constitutes a work whose product is going to be consumed by the subject who is doing the work himself... But we are going to look at all that as we move forward. For now let us take it in purity, and it is a labor that if materially plays a role in the production of those use-values, produces value, but can never produce surplus value.

So, here the prolongation of the working day appears and the condition of capital as the concrete subject of the process of human life, and human life as the *object* of capital, reappears. Because what is going to appear is: money, which is dead labor, the product of previous labor, becomes means of production that continue to be the product of interior labor, it causes that product to be set in motion because it is incorporated into new living labor. And from this incorporation of living labor into which a part of the money that is the value of labor power was transformed, a part of dead labor, and the other part of dead labor that was in the means of production retains its value because on it that living labor operated under a concrete form that is socially useful and renewed the possibility of appearing represented as value. what it is going to propose is that all this dead work is now capable of being valued, of engendering more value. And he puts that well-known expression that it seems "[...] a kind of animated monster that breaks into 'work' as if it were enclosing a soul in its body",[113] and with this figure what he is talking about is a subject.

What follows is: what is the valorization process? It is a process of value production that extends from a certain point in its development. Consequently, in the part that is replaced, the value of the means of production is preserved and the value of labour-power, i.e., the labour which replaces the capital which has been advanced, is replaced. What Marx is going to say is: the production process, from the point of view of the production of value, is a process of production of new value, because the value of labor power has already disappeared but a new value has been generated that is equivalent to the old. From that point on, the production process is a process of production of surplus value.

Then he is going to make an analysis of the condition that this is socially necessary work done under normal conditions, that therefore the capitalist has to take care that the worker has the means of production with the normal quality,

[113] Marx, K. (1977: 146), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

that normality of the conditions to start up the labor power depends on the capitalist. not of the worker, who does not have private property over his means of production. And as for the use of labor power, what the capitalist demands of that labor power is that it be put in normal operating conditions, with the normal intensity of that moment. Again, the synthesis is made at the end, and what Marx is going to refer to is: this is the capitalist process of commodity production.

Up to this point we knew commodities as simple products of labor. Now... We lack the deployment of some aspects, but basically we begin to confront commodities as a product of labor that is alienated in capital, as products of capital. But up to this point we have seen commodities as the product of capital only in the process of production. And we're going to see, if at some point in the course of development we face commodities as a product of capital as we know them in production, or how we see them when we confront them in the process of circulation. For that we are going to have to wait until Volume 3. So far all that we know are commodities as a product of capital insofar as they spring from the process of production, and therefore they are materializations of SNALdPaI which is represented as the value of these commodities.

There is one last point that Marx is going to develop is what happens to complex labor, which appears to materialize in its product, represented in a greater mass of value than simple average, normal labor. What had we seen of the complex work? It is the one that the commodity producer has to perform in order to produce himself with productive capacities that go beyond what is normal. That which he performs in order to produce himself, but is general for all, is cancelled, because if commodities are sold simply as materializations of the labor that is made directly to produce them, plus the value of the means of production, but the living labor that is made directly to produce them, since everyone had to spend a part of his labor power to have this aptitude to work, is compensated.

But what happens when an individual has to work to produce himself above what is normal? It is necessary to socially recognize the work he did and that is going to be represented materialized in his product as a mass of value greater than that which corresponds to the work he spent immediately. Otherwise, the individual would not be able to perform this more complex work, because if it is not recognized as a value and it is something that is abnormal with respect to the general condition, he has no way of disposing of what he needs to reproduce himself as an individual who has to have this capacity.

If one takes a society based on the bonds of personal dependence, if an individual has to do extraordinary work to learn to do the specific task that he is then going to perform, society feeds him for the additional time that he has to be building his labor force simply on the basis of the bonds of personal dependence. It is a member of the community, and the community knows that these individuals have to be fed longer before they can produce. But in the capitalist mode of production, where there are no bonds of personal dependence, the only way to produce that labor power is for the individual to be recognized as having been working to a degree that is extraordinary. And the form of recognition is that the work he did during his formative period also appears materialized in the product

after his actual work, and this product contains more value because it contains more work: the sum of immediate labor applied + the proportion of work that the individual had to perform in order to have these extraordinary productive attributes.

Complex work needs a special, different development, done by the individual himself, to have the ability to do the work he is going to do. I was changing something that I proposed in older workshops that I think is not correct. What is simple work today, in a society where the general condition is to be literate? Marx posed it in a society in which the mass of the working population was illiterate. Today you cannot work under normal conditions being illiterate (although it is not simply like that, but let's take it in purity). But to do certain jobs you have to go through a process in which the individual is producing himself, which transcends literacy. That individual must be socially recognized as having been spending his labor power without being able to apply it to the production of commodities during the time in which he continued to be trained. Because the only way that this individual has access to the product of the work of others is to be recognized that he worked that time in order to be able to be in a position to produce that commodity that is socially necessary and that a simply literate individual cannot produce. Let us take this in terms of the simple production of commodities (then we look at the worker).

This is complex work. So how much value does this individual materialize in the product of his labor? It is going to be necessary to represent as value not only the immediate work that he is doing to produce but the additional work that he did to produce himself with the capacity to produce that which can only be produced after he has been specially formed. So, this is the value of the product of complex labor: immediate labor + extraordinary work that the individual did. I gave the example of the individual who has to lift weights, developing an extraordinary strength – if he is going to apply it to the production of commodities, if he is going to apply it to having fun because he likes it, then he is not going to produce value because he is not going to do social labor, he is going to do simply individual work.

We have not yet entered into the problem that one faces with what Marx poses here. When Marx looks at complex labor he finds this situation: well, it may be that he sold his labor power to the capitalist and when he applies that labor power in 1 hour he produces more value than that which corresponds to a simple hour of work, then he will produce more surplus value. What about the rate of capital gain? Marx will place great emphasis in development on a rate of surplus value that has a general, dominant or average character. And here it is worth making a clarification.

The rate of surplus-value, from one branch of production to another, does not in itself have a determination which gives it a general character. The general character of the rate of surplus value can only come indirectly, that is (sorry, I jumped to the rate of surplus value that comes later but Marx also puts it here): if labor power is more or less universal, undifferentiated, all are more or less equal — and this is what Marx is going to make explicit and sometimes implicit. the value of labor power will be more or less equal for all individuals (if they have the same labor power it costs the same to produce it). And if they have a certain amount of

labour-power in their bodies, then the working day, the necessary labour-time, is given because they all have more or less the value of labour-power, and also the value of surplus-labour is going to be more or less the same. Consequently, indirectly, the rate of surplus value will be common to all capitals, all workers will produce it in the same proportion.

When Marx is confronted with this criterion of complex work, he says: there is a problem here, because it produces more value. What's the answer? Well, but their labor power is also more expensive, and consequently there is a proportionality between the more value they produce and the more value of their labor power. And this has given rise to a series of confusions and inversions. Because here there are two completely different jobs that do not necessarily compensate each other. Complex work is the work that the individual performed to develop that special labor force, the value of his labor power is the work that others performed privately and independently so that this individual has labor power. The work he did with respect to himself is not social, it is not part of the value of labor power, it is when one applies it to the production of commodities for others. Apart from the common recognition, which is given by the amount of immediate labor expended, it has to be recognized in addition to the labor time that one extraordinarily expended oneself to have that labor power. On the other hand, the value of labor power is the product of the SNALdPaI to produce that labor power. It is the value of the commodities that the worker had to consume in order to have this labor power. And the two jobs don't necessarily compensate each other. And so one has to recognize that there may be different rates of surplus value depending on the different complexities of labor.

If one looks at it from simple work, it is compensated there and more or less one can think of a general rate of surplus value. But it is debatable whether complex labor simply compensates for the higher value that is going to be realized by the fact that that labor power is more expensive, because the individual had to consume use values while he was doing that extraordinary work to produce himself. That is why their labor force is more expensive. But it is not the immediate compensation of one thing with the other. And what Marx later clarifies is: it depends on how much more labor power costs compared to how much more value it produces, it is a quantitative problem: how much surplus labor the worker is going to yield.

Javiera: I don't hunt you down when you say it's not compensated.

JIC: Because they are two quantities of work independent of each other. One is the one that the individual himself made to produce himself with the extraordinary labor power, the other is how much it cost to produce that extraordinary labor power for the commodities that individual had to consume. They are not the same job. In the example of educational training it appears immediately, and in Chile more than in Argentina.

The individual has to carry out an extraordinary study to train his workforce beyond what is normal. That individual, when one looks at him, the difference between the student and the teacher is that the teacher is doing social labor,

because he is spending his body so that the student consumes the product of that work. When the student looks at it in the immediacy, he is doing a simply individual work, to produce himself. They are different jobs. As soon as the work that this student does to produce himself is extraordinary, it will have to be recognized not as simple individual work, but as private and independent social labor, because it is necessary work to produce that commodity that requires it. He did not do it for the pleasure of being an individual who knows more, but because it was a condition to be able to produce this commodity that is a social use value, he makes it for others. Then, that part of the work that the student was doing, because it is extraordinary, will be represented materialized in the value of the commodities that that individual, when he has the labor power that was required, applies to the production of commodities.

The work done by the teacher is part of the value of that individual's labor power, but not of the value of what that individual produces. Now: it may be that the teacher has had to dedicate 10 hours of socially necessary work. Suppose that the teacher receives the full value of the product of his work. Let's say that education is like in Chile: you have to pay the value of the commodity-education (then between free and paid education makes a difference). Its value corresponds to 10 hours of work by the teacher, for the set of time that the student was doing extraordinary. But the time that the student applied is 20 hours of work. Let's assume that the student is going to work (I don't know if the example comes out like this directly, but we're going to make him die quickly) throughout his useful life for capital, 10 effective hours. But before that he worked 20 hours overtime to produce his labor power. How much is each hour of student work worth? If it is 10 hours, that is the value of that product. So the value of the student's labor power to work 10 hours is 10$. But how much value will it produce in those 10 hours of work? He is going to put 10 hours of living labor, he is going to produce a value of $10, but also since he does complex work, the value of the product of his labor will appear the 20 hours that he was producing himself: he is going to produce a value of $30, and the value of his labor power is $10. Consequently the rate of surplus-value is higher than that of a common worker, whose value of his labour-power is $10, and in 10 hours of labour he produces $10[114].

So, in this case the common worker has a surplus value rate of 0 and the one who does complex work has a surplus value rate of 50%. This is just an arbitrary example. But then, the complexity of labor as determined by labor that is different from labor that determines the value of labor power, does not necessarily have a relationship of equivalence. Maybe yes, it may add less value than it costs to produce that additional labor force, or it may add more value.

For all the analysis that follows, Marx places great emphasis on a common rate of surplus value, except for conditions where differences will appear later, but not within the same unit of social production that he is looking at, they will appear between one country and another. For me, the fact that there are different rates of surplus value does not create a substantial differentiation in the development that is being done, and in any case on average one can say that it is compensated. But

[114] He had to spend 10 hours on education, but it was normal education to produce $1/h.

the difference it makes is simply one more determination that I would be playing. And what Marx does is to clean up that determination by saying: they are compensated and we have everything reduced to simple work. It is more simple labor that the worker applied, and it is more simple labor that must be applied to produce that worker's labor power. [...] What it does is put it as a simplifying assumption, it is a quantitative problem, not a qualitative one. And he says: let us suppose that the worker employed by capital performs a simple average social labor and we save ourselves a useless operation, we simplify the analysis of the problem. And with that we would have chapter V unfolded.

Iván: Why is it that sometimes the work of education that is incorporated into the worker's labor force is not recognized as such in front of other workers who do not have that education incorporated? I think of teachers in relation to a bank worker who may not have studied but simply, because of the position he occupies and the fact that it is a bank, has a higher income; and other types of work where there is an education and yet lower salaries are charged than those of a common or uneducated worker with agreements and so on. I understand the general determination, but then when I go to apply it, it is difficult for me to translate that, why there is such an abrupt discrepancy in income.

JIC: First we would have to look at all the concrete determinations. Up to this point, the only condition has appeared to us as a condition for the sale of labour power for its value, and if in order to produce this complex labour the worker needed to consume use values for a longer time and continues to need to consume more use values in order to be able to reproduce that labour power, the value of that labour power is higher and it would appear that he is not selling it for its value. Then we have to look at the intensity of the work, which also plays a role there, and here we are talking about a medium intensity. It is debatable whether the intensity of teaching work is simply equivalent to an average intensity of work or whether it has a... In part there is a recognition that there is a high intensity of work because teacher retirement is at a younger age, because it is considered that the individual's labor force ended there, and if it ran out faster it is because he spent it more intensely. A teacher's workday, especially in primary school, is supposed to be half of a general workday because it has a higher intensity. And in the example that you, Iván, are looking at, that is far from being present in the determinations of teachers' salaries, at least in Argentina. So there one has to look at a whole series of concrete determinations, and we are not going to get to many of them because it goes far beyond Volume 3.

Javiera: I was stuck with this idea that the capitalist generates value. Because the figure of the capitalist never appears with that determination.

JIC: Because the capitalist's labor is irrelevant from the point of view of capital. The function it fulfills is not, but it does not produce surplus value. Now what is going to appear is what productive labor is from the point of view of capital, in fact it appeared before. Labour which replaces the value of labour power is unproductive from the point of view of capital, it is not the production of surplus value. The capitalist's labor, no matter how much value it produced, is irrelevant, unproductive. Marx will recognize the capitalist much later... It will appear that the

capitalist has a "historical right to exist." Why does it have it? Because he is the organizer of social labor carried out privately and independently. That does not mean that it values capital.

Javiera: That's fine, but I was referring to the fact that if it produces value, it is developing socially necessary work.

JIC: Yes. But it is unproductive from the point of view of the movement of capital.

Javiera: Yes, yes, but the capitalist does not appear as an individual who is working, who spends his labor power.

JIC: It's irrelevant. And he does not live off the product of his labor. It will appear fully as not producing any value, but insofar as the work that the capitalist does is socially necessary from the point of view of the materiality of the production of use value, it produces value, and it may be necessary. Looked at in its purity, from the point of view of valorization it is irrelevant whether the capitalist works or does not work. Marx will use the figure of the non-worker to refer to the capitalist, although in *Capital* he will not be so much. First he treats him as a non-worker in *Capital*, I am thinking of a particular part and what appears is that his work is irrelevant.

Iván: Sometimes in restaurants the capitalist is the chef himself, and that could be the current example of a capitalist who produces value because he is working and is also the owner of the business.

JIC: I would leave it pending for when we continue to look at what the role of the capitalist is. Because up to this point we have a capitalist who is at the same time a producer of commodities, we take him in this double character. Let us see whether the capitalist can act as a producer of commodities on a par with his workers. And I put this again: the capitalist has to personify capital in circulation, and the work he does in circulation is unproductive of value. The capitalist has to watch over the worker, and he is unproductive. It is only to the extent that the work done by the capitalist is a condition for the material development of the process of production abstracted from its social form that the capitalist can appear as a productive laborer of value.

What is it that Marx does not consider him in that condition, when he looks at him in the purity of his condition as a capitalist, not mixed with his possible condition as a producer of commodities? What it does is to be able to look at the movement of this social relationship in its purity. Who is this subject and who is the other? It is not for the consolation of some capitalist who also works: there he does not function as a capitalist, but as a producer of commodities, as a capitalist what you do is to valorize your capital. Something appears in Volume 1, but especially in Volume 3, functions of the capitalist that are not performed by the capitalist himself but by buying labor power that is going to fulfill those functions.

Chapter VI. Constant capital and variable capital

Let us come, then, to the chapter on constant capital and variable capital. The first thing that Marx is going to deploy is: the value of the means of production reappears in the value of the product, it is transferred. I will pause on a clarification. Why does value reappear in the product? It is the product of private labor that was once recognized as socially useful. Marx takes the example of the spinning of cotton. The cotton bought by the spinning capitalist was already recognized as the product of socially useful labor done privately and independently, but it was recognized by the cotton buyer. Now there is a need for it to be recognized as socially useful again. The first is because it is materialized in the form of yarn, and now it has to be... It is part of the SNALdPaI that materialized in the yarn. But that recognition has an additional determination, which is that the spinner changed the form of the use value of cotton, and it remains to be seen whether under that new form it is still the product of useful social labor done privately and independently or not. So, it transfers to the value of the product because what's at stake is that it needs to be recognized again.

And Marx is going to make some observations that follow that I do not want to advance now. The value of the means of production is preserved in the value of the product, thanks to the mediation of living labor. And so what he is going to say is that the work of the worker, in a single movement, does two things:

1) He preserves the value of the means of production, transferring it to the value of the product, and this is what he puts at stake is the concrete labor that the worker does: if he does it badly he spoils the means of production and does not transfer their value to that of the product. From this point of view, what matters is the concrete labor that the worker does, and here it is fully expressed how dead labor makes use of living labor. If the means of production are not brought into contact with living labour, they lose their use-value, they decompose, and the only way to preserve their use-value and consequently value is by making use of living labour.

2) The other character that brings into play the labor of the worker is that it produces value for its own sake. It must have produced a use-value, but what matters from the point of view of capital is the quantitative aspect. The concrete useful character of the worker's labour for the capitalist is not to produce use-values, it is to produce surplus value. And what matters is the abstract character of the work. Here the movements that are at the beginning of the double character of the commodity and of commodity-producing labor reappear.

Marx gives some examples. Two things appear again. I'm going to forget one, so I'll put it on now. Living labour preserves the value of the means of production on the assumption that the means of production have value because they have been products of labour. The use as means of production of elements of nature that are not filtered by labor, do not contain value, have no way of transferring value to the product. But the other issue that is going to appear here in development is the difference between raw materials and the instruments of production.

The raw material is consumed in its entirety each time a production process is carried out, and consequently, its value appears in its entirety in that of the commodity produced. Even if a part of the raw material is lost in a technically inevitable way, even if that part of the raw material body is missing from the body of the final product, the value was transferred in full. But what will appear with respect to the instruments of production is that they serve for a succession of productive processes, and their use-value is gradually consumed as they are used. And consequently, in the same proportion that it is worn out, as it is being used, it transfers its value in the same proportion in which that use-value was consumed. And then this difference will appear within the means of production between raw materials and auxiliary materials that are consumed in full in each cycle of production, and the instruments of production whose use value is gradually consumed.

From the point of view of the valorization process, the instrument of production is being consumed in a portion. From the point of view of the labour process, the instrument of production must be complete and used in its entirety. And here there is a divorce between the capital put into the instruments of production from the point of view of the process of valorization, where they intervene only to the extent that they are consumed, and the instruments of production put into it from the point of view of the material process of production, which enter entirely into each cycle of the production process. They intervene fragmentarily in the process of value production. And then, what is going to appear is: how much does the use of the instruments of production cost the capitalist? How much of that instrument does he consume? What productive forces of living human labour are at its disposal thanks to the full use of the instrument of production? And we're going to see this unfold later.

He is going to make the clarification that the means of production can never transfer more value than they have. In view of this, with regard to the means of production and the intervention of living labour, which cannot convert dead labour into new living labour which in itself can produce more value, and therefore cannot add value to the means of production. All you can do is keep it. Where does the added new value come from? The addition is to the value of the product, not of the means of production. What happens in the process of production with the value of labor power, with the productive consumption for the capital of the worker's labor power?

[II]

[...] We were about to enter with the consumption of labor power. What we had is: when the labor force is put to work, it becomes living labor and as SNALdPaI we now have that movement. And from the point of view of the production of value, what we are going to have is that as the labor force becomes living labor and materializes in its product, the generation of a new value appears that is objectified in the product, where there is no longer a simple conservation of value but the generation of that new value with this labor that is applied to the materials

bonuses, on the object of work, and adds value to that object. Here Marx is going to make a whole movement that I am going to try to synthesize.

Marx recalls why the value of labor power was determined, corresponding to the commodities that the working family needs to consume in order to have labor power to sell. In the example it corresponds to 6h of SNALdPaI and that substance of value will necessarily be expressed in the form of a certain amount of money, Marx is going to take 3 shillings. I make it easier by taking a monetary unit that has a decimal structure.

The working day begins, it is materialized in its product and that day goes by, and what Marx is going to consider is the part of the day that corresponds to living labor applied to the labor time necessary to reproduce labor power. So look at how much is the value of the product of that living labor, added to the dead labor that transferred its value to the product, and what appears is that the money that the capitalist advanced by buying means of production and labor power did not operate as capital, it was not valorized. And he makes a whole series of figures with the capitalist saying that this time they are not going to deceive him, that instead of putting his capital into the production process what he is going to do is buy the product already made, which he abstained from...

Until Marx's time, the argument that appeared in vulgar economics to justify the appropriation of surplus value by the capitalist was to abstain from consuming, who instead of having disposed of what he had and consuming it, applied it as capital for the process of valorization. Today it appears transformed into the "waiting" to consume. One sees the similarity of what Marx is going through with the arguments that appear from the justification of the capitalist's profit: that he put the capital, that the worker without capital cannot produce and then he is entitled to a part because he has provided a service to the worker by letting him use the means of production.

And here the term "service" will appear, which Marx has developed a lot about services both in the *Grundrisse* and in the drafts of *Capital* from 1863 (approx.) onwards, here he will say: service is the utility that provides a use value, be it commodity or labor. And here what is at stake is a problem of exchange value. That is where he says: the image of the capitalist that he has is modified... First, he states that he watches over and works, and therefore a part of the product corresponds to him, but that at a certain point the capitalist recomposes himself and knows what is the secret that is contained in the valorization of capital. So, what Marx is going to unfold is what happens to work when the working day extends beyond the working time necessary to reproduce labor power.

The capitalist bought the worker's labour power for a day's work and can therefore dispose of this labour power during the 12-hour day. The worker continues to work the 6 hours that transcend the labor time necessary to reproduce his labor power and the result is that in those 6 hours of work that he added, he materialized in his product those 6 hours. We had that the product of each hour of materialized labor appeared as 3 shillings, and consequently the product that the capitalist now has not only contains the value of the means of

production which he advanced and consumed, not only contains the value of labor-power, but a new value has arisen which is higher than that which was enclosed at the start. There is a surplus value, there is more value than there was initially.

It was valorized in production, and at the same time this surplus value is only manifested in circulation and returns to the double unity that we had when we started from the double character of the commodity (use value/value), from labor that produces use values/value, and here we have the expression of the synthesis at the end of the development of the unity of the labor process and the process of valorization. We saw the complex work last time, I told you that it was later, and with this we would have chapter VI unfolded[115]. In the end there is the synthesis: the capitalist production process is the unity of this labor process that produces use values and valorizes it. There will be this contrast: as a unit of the labor process and the production of value, this is a process of commodity production. As a unit of a labor process and a valorization process, this is a capitalist production process, the capitalist form of commodity production.

Up to this point, it was exposed how surplus value was generated, how capital was valued. And now what Marx is going to deploy are the concrete determinations regarding the difference between what happens to the capital put into the means of production and what happens to the capital put into the labor power. From the point of view of how the value of the product arises, this contrast will appear.

Both are part of the value of the product. And what had already appeared is how the value of the means of production does it: it is transferred to the value of the product thanks to the mediation of living labor. What Marx proposes is: but here the worker does not work twice, once to preserve the value of the means of production and once to generate new value. It preserves the value of the means of production in so far as it adds new labour, and consequently adds new value to the product. From the point of view of the movement of value generation, what matters is not the concrete form of work, what matters is that it is socially necessary abstract labour. And here this double character of labor reappears: in order to preserve the value of the means of production, what matters is that the worker does not perform his concrete labor badly, not producing a use value, the value of the means of production used does not reappear, it has been lost. But it is thanks to the abstract labor of the worker that this new value is produced, which has hitherto been replaced, compensated for the part of capital that had been applied to the purchase of labor power, and there is a new part that implied the valorization of capital [...].

The observation appears that they cannot transfer more value than they have, that the only way to incorporate more value through the labor of the worker is to preserve that of the means of production. And what is going to be the axis of development is that just as the use value of the means of production is consumed, its value is preserved: it is the same value that reappears in the value of the product.

[115] He says "V" and I correct "VI".

What about the "subjective factor" (the only subject of the production process is the worker, the human subject who uses the means of production)? What is going to happen is that as this labor power is put to work, what is generated is a new value, but it is generated at the expense of the disappearance of the commodity-labor power, and therefore, unlike what happens with the means of production, that commodity is going to be annihilated in the production process because it is going to be transformed into force of work as a result of the SNALdPaI, in productive activity, work.

What we had from chapter IV is that work is not the product of work: it is productive activity, it lacks value; what it does is that, as it materializes in its product, it generates new value. Marx here returns to what he had proposed in the previous chapter of cutting the working day to the working time that corresponds to the reproduction of labor power, to the value of labor power, and what is going to happen is that here there is the disappearance of that labor power and therefore of its value. and at the same time the generation of a new value that comes to replace the value that disappeared. And up to this point there is no valorization: it simply replaces an old value that was carried in a use-value that was consumed, and that constitutes a new value that is materialized in the product, and that if the development of the working day continues beyond this point, where the value of labor power has already been replaced with this new value that the worker created, Now the worker continues to create a new value with his labor, but now it corresponds to a consumption of labor power that cost the capitalist nothing. And consequently here we are going to have the generation of surplus value, the process of valorization.

He returns to the contrast between the capital put into the means of production and the capital put into labour-power which disappears in the process of production but which generates a new value, a part of which replaces the value of that capital put into the purchase of labour-power, and as the working day extends beyond the point necessary to reproduce labour-power, it continues to generate a new value that constitutes surplus value. Marx goes on to synthesize this differentiation by saying: the capital put into the purchase of labor power is a capital that in its normal movement constitutes a variable magnitude [variable capital]. The purpose of the disbursement in this purchase of labor power is that it produces more value than it cost. On the other hand, with the means of production—which had already seen all the previous differences with respect to what happened in the labor process—in the process of valorization we now look at the synthesis of what happens to the capital put into the purchase of these means of production, and what is their normal movement is that their value is preserved transferred to the value of the product. and consequently that the magnitude of its value does not change [constant capital].

What Marx will observe is that there may be circumstances in which the value of constant capital changes when it was already functioning, and he will take the case of both the means of labor (instruments of production) and raw materials. Their value can change, depending on whether the productivity of the labor that produces them has changed, it does not occur within production processes in

which they are being used, it is something that occurred outside of that process... And this situation is going to happen: the value of constant capital changed at the time it was used. What is the value that this constant capital transfers to the value of the product? It is not the value they had when the capitalist paid up that capital: now those commodities have changed in value and the value that is transferred to the value of the product is the value that the means of production now have.

Suppose there was an increase in the productivity of the labor that produces a raw material and its value was halved. Now it doesn't matter how much the capitalist has paid that he is going to use it as a means of production—let's say $100, and now it's worth $50. The socially necessary abstract labour which is necessary today to produce the commodity which the capitalist is producing, in which the value of the means of production is to reappear, does not correspond to what it cost to produce the machinery[116] when the capitalist bought it: it now corresponds to what it costs today to reproduce that machinery. And so, what we are going to have is: the value of a commodity is the abstract labor socially necessary to produce it *in the current social conditions*, those that govern at all times. And Marx is going to refer to this several times as the labor necessary to reproduce commodities.

Let's assume that it is about the production of bread. The oven cost $100. Today a technical development makes that same oven cost $50. He no longer transfers $100 to you because he doesn't have it. Later Marx is going to dwell much more on this question, but he already puts it here to point out that the normal movement of constant capital is that it does not change in value, but that it can happen to it due to circumstances inherent in this same production process that it does not transfer value because the concrete labor was poorly done. but due to circumstances that are alien to this process of production, which changed the value of that means of production, be it raw material or instrument of production, the value of the constant capital of the capitalist changed, whether he paid what he has paid, for better or for worse.

We have this possibility that constant capital transfers an amount of value to the product that is not simply what the capitalist advanced, but the value that these means of production have at the moment when (let's suppose that it is immediate) they are actually being consumed in the product and the product is also being sold. Until capital returns to the form of money, the value of constant capital is subject to changes in the value of its elements. Production has ended, and we must remember that valorization occurs *in production and circulation*. Until the product was brought into circulation and money was transformed, if we look only at the question of constant capital, the value transferred is subject to the movements that may occur in the value of the means of production. It's always what it costs to reproduce that product (to produce it again *today*). If the most productive technique is not available, which makes it possible to cheapen the means of production, until it is not available, it is not what determines the value of the commodity. This is what it costs to reproduce the commodity *today*, for which the

[116] Mistake: we were talking about raw material. But it's the same thing.

new means of production must be available. Later we are going to look at a series of issues related to this that have to do with the following.

The price—not the value of the commodities—if it is known that there is going to be a means of production that is now going to be able to be put into operation and that it is going to be able to be in the product immediately, and therefore that product is going to be cheaper because that means of production transfers half the value of the original, if this is available today, the effect on the value of the commodity is immediate. If it is known that this is going to be there but today it is not available, it will not have an immediate effect on the value of the commodity, but if it is materially possible to delay the consumption of that commodity, then what will happen is that it will begin to be reflected in the price. But only to the extent that it can be delayed; if not, even if it is known that tomorrow this commodity is going to be cheapened, if I need to consume today, the value is determined by the possibility that it exists in circulation today. I don't know if this is more confusing or not.

If there is a product that today is produced in a certain condition, and it is known that tomorrow it will be produced either with a direct productivity of labor or with a cheapening of its means of production, which will imply that its value is lower, the condition for that value to become the value that governs, is that this is available today. If it is not there today and it is going to be available tomorrow and it is possible to wait in the consumption of that commodity until tomorrow, what is going to happen is that the solvent social need for this commodity is going to go down, and as it is going to go down and what was produced today is going to be left over, it is going to be sold below what *the value is until today*. But it is a transition towards the new value that tomorrow will be the one that corresponds to the greater productivity of labor applied directly to this production, or to the cheapening of the means of production. So, reproducing it is not simply that tomorrow it will be reproduced in this condition, it is that today it can be in a position to be produced with this new technique. And this central difference appears in the movement of prices.

The classic example is that of the price of agricultural commodities, which as they are subject to these seasonal conditions, then work is located at a certain time of the year, but consumption takes place throughout the year, what happens is that the value continues to be the old value, but if it is known that the productivity of labor is going to rise and that the value of the commodity is going to go up. to fall, to the extent that consumption can be postponed, the price begins to fall, *not the value*. And if it is known that the productivity of labor is going to fall and therefore the value is going to rise, what happens is that consumption begins to be brought forward or a solvent social need arises that tries to buy now, and then the price will begin to rise above what the value has been up to now. because the day the new harvest comes out, the value will fall or go up. If it is being sold below value, it is superfluous with respect to the solvent social need that until now was normal and that now a determination has appeared that was not present before: that consumption is going to be brought forward or postponed on the basis of what is known to happen to the value of this commodity at a certain time.

I always make this differentiation. You have normality and the *movement* of normality. Normality is moving towards (a term that is fashionable now[117]) the "new normal" that is going to be imposed. What one is looking at is how it moves from one to the other, but the value itself has not changed: what happens is that it began to be sold above or below its value on the condition that consumption can be brought forward or, more markedly, postponed, because if that has to enter consumption and cannot be postponed, then the price is not going to fall, because the solvent social need is going to continue to be present with the same force. It means that there is always some possibility of advancing or delaying consumption, and also in these commodities that have a seasonal production where the productivity of labor is subject to fluctuations from one year to the next, normally when a year ends there is some of the product of the previous year, so that also works as if there is a surplus or a lack and there is all this concrete movement. The concrete price movement is not the concrete movement of the value.

What is not here (because here Marx does not use what it costs to reproduce the commodity, will appear later), but on the basis of this that value is determined by the abstract labor socially necessary to reproduce the commodity, a whole series of constructions have appeared regarding that there are commodities that cannot be reproduced. that are unique. I leave that for later, but that is not the meaning of what it costs to "reproduce" the commodity: it is how much it costs to produce it again today. From there appear proposals that since there are commodities that cannot be reproduced, they have no value.

If you like, we move on to chapter VII, which is the rate of surplus value, which is the expression of the capacity for valorization that variable capital has. What I want to emphasize is this as a synthesis: there is an essential difference between what happens with constant capital and what happens with variable capital. Constant capital retains its value, there is no generation of new value, it is dead labor that as a capacity to produce value cannot multiply itself and what it does is that its value, if concrete living labor is well done, reappears in the product. Variable capital is annihilated in the labour-process, it disappears because the labour-power of the worker disappears, it is consumed and the commodity has disappeared. But as the worker transforms his labor power into labor, he materializes that labor in the product, he generates a new value that is materialized in the product, a part of which replaces the value of labor power, it is a value that did not exist before, but what he does is replace the value that was annihilated from labor power. and the other part generates that new value that is surplus value.

And this differentiation for me one can express it in terms... To see how manifest this is from the point of view of the concrete movement of capital, of practical consciousness, that universally there is a tax called "on value added," and that is, on new value, and how is the tax calculated? The value of the product is subtracted from the value of the means of production used, the constant capital consumed. With which it is being recognized that there is no generation of value there, that the value that was added to the product is all originated in the current production

[117] Reference to the post-confinement period in the context of the 2020 Pandemic.

process. Of course, the practical consciousness of the capitalist mode of production does not distinguish that one part corresponded to paid labour and the other to surplus value. But what is being recognized is that the value of variable capital has disappeared and there is a new value (a part) that comes to replace it. But the tax is not calculated by saying that the value of the product must be subtracted from the value of the means of production (and I am going to put it in terms of the concrete movement) and the wages because it is clear that what was paid as wages disappeared as a substance that had value and now what appeared is a new value.

Chapter VII. The rate of surplus value

1. The degree of exploitation of the labor force.

Let's continue with the rate of surplus value. Marx is going to look at the difference between the capital with which the movement opened up and the total capital of the capitalist... He will begin to use the symbols that will be extended in use throughout the rest of the work: the "*c*" for the constant capital consumed, "*v*" for the variable capital, which is always consumed, and "*c*" for the total capital. But also, here it will be like... the paid-up capital will appear in the deployment. Then it will appear as an expression of the paid-up capital: $C = c + v$, which is *strictly* valid only if all the constant capital advanced is consumed in its entirety each time it is used.

We have this advanced, advanced, advanced capital, which is put to valorization, and the result of its valorization: the valorized capital (C'). But we have already seen that constant capital does not add to the process of valorization. And that the only part of capital that generates more value is variable capital, and that therefore, in the value of valorized capital, now in addition to the constant capital that was consumed plus variable capital, there is a new element, a new portion of value: surplus value [*p*]. Then there is a whole series of manipulations that I refrain from stopping. The key to the valorization of variable capital lies in the relationship between surplus value and the variable capital that generated it.

He is going to propose a second relationship that is of extremely significant practical importance, which is the relationship between surplus value and total capital. But what Marx is going to propose is that this is the rate of profit. But if one has not yet answered what is the relation between surplus value and the portion of capital that generates it, how is it that consequently that portion of capital acts as the subject of its valorization while the other part is a condition for it to act as a subject but is inert, the first thing to do is to look at the relationship between surplus value and the circulation that engendered it. And so, you're going to look at this rate of surplus value, the ratio of surplus value to variable capital.

Since variable capital corresponds to the value of the means of subsistence of the workers, the portion of the day which the worker worked in addition to the value of the variable capital is that which corresponds to the *labour* necessary to reproduce labour-power. And here another determination of necessary labour appears: it is no longer simply the labour necessary to produce the commodity, but to reproduce labour-power. One must always look carefully at which of the two terms of necessary labor is going to appear. And up to this point, up to the portion of the day that the worker produces a new value that comes to replace the value of variable capital, what we have is a process of reproduction of total capital: it is the same value that existed at the beginning. What transcends this labor time necessary to reproduce labor power is what will appear as surplus/surplus labor time. And now what we are going to have is that this same relationship that we had seen earlier, the rate of surplus value, what it shows us is what proportion of time

is extracted from the worker without compensation, producing more value than his labor power costs.

Marx is going to make an observation here. I will return to this later, but first I want to complete the issues that are here. Here Marx begins to pose a contrast between the worker and the slave, where the difference between the two is the way in which each of these direct producers is forced to render surplus labor. And consequently, if it yields surplus-labour and produces more value than it received in return, what we are going to have now is that the rate [or quota] of *p* is "the exact expression of the *degree*[118] *of exploitation of labour-power by capital* or of the labourer by the capitalist",[119] and here is the synthesis of the content contained in the purchase and sale of labour-power for its value. Below he will give different examples and the synthesis of that.

2. Representation of the value of the product in proportional parts of the product itself.

When one had the value of the commodity, it can now be analyzed, it is not that value is composed of the sum of these three parts (constant capital, variable capital and surplus value), value is still the amount of SNALdPaI that was expended in producing the commodity. But what he is going to say is: *analytically*, destroying the organicity of the determination of value as SNALdPaI, one can decompose it into three parts, and they appear as parts that integrate the value of the product. And it's going to do this that's going to play a central role. We are not going to see it in Volume 1, then in its full development in Volume 2 and Volume 3, but this unfolding appears here for the first time in which one can look at the value of the commodity [...][120] Or he can look at the value of the commodity and therefore the product as if it were decomposed into a part that replaces constant capital, another part that replaces variable capital, surplus value, and that then the total mass of the product is divided into these three parts.

I put it in these terms: I have a product value of 100 and I have 100 units of product, and let's assume that it is **1/3** + **1/3** + **1/3**. In this total product mass of 100 units I have a value of 100. I can look at each unit of product and say: this unit of product contains **1/3** of its value, which is constant capital, another **1/3** variable capital, another **1/3** surplus value. Or I can take from the total product of 100 and say: **1/3** (33.33 units) is all constant capital, **1/3** is only variable capital, and **1/3** of units are only surplus value. And I will always have this double way of manifesting value in the total mass of product. That is going to play a substantial role in the development that goes ahead, so far it is simply marked like this.

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[118] JIC says "exploitation rate".
[119] Marx, K. (1977: 165), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[120] There is a cut in the recording.

3. Senior's "last hour".

[... y...]

4. The surplus product.

And he will have the criticism of Senior's proposal. Marx begins with an irony about Senior by saying that the industrialists took him out of Oxford and brought him to Manchester not to teach, but to learn. He makes the calculation that only the last hour of work is the one that produces the net profit, and Marx makes the calculation of how what Senior proposes is false. And [Point 4.] closes with the synthesis that necessary labour + surplus labour is the absolute magnitude of labour-time, i.e., the working day.

Here what one has to take into account is: it is not that it is divided, but that this is how the total duration of the working day is generated. There is an essential difference between Marx's approach to Ricardo's development, to which Marx is going to refer (at the end of Volume 3 he is going to make a reference). If one looks at the working day as divided into necessary and surplus labor time (and this is how Ricardo sees it and it appears in the Ricardians who speak of exploitation of the worker), and a part is paid to the worker and a part is not, so that the capitalist's profit is a deduction from the product of the worker's labor (Ricardian view when talking about exploitation): The worker is exploited because he is not paid for the full product of his labor.

What Marx is proposing is: it is not that the worker is subtracted from a part of what he produces, it is that the worker is forced to work beyond the time necessary to reproduce himself. To look at exploitation as a problem of distribution naturalizes the working day proper to the capitalist mode of production, which encloses surplus labor. And then when one looks at it in development what appears is the other way around: the necessary labor time is what is needed to reproduce the worker, the rest of the time is exploited because he is forced to work more than necessary. There is a substantial difference between the Ricardian explanations where exploitation and development appear that we are looking at here.

Javiera: When you say that the worker works 8 hours, 4 to replace his labor force and another 4 are surplus, he is doing a kind of division, right?

JIC: Then you use the term "divide" and everything (besides, when you make the rate of surplus value, you are dividing, you are making a relationship that is a division), but what I wanted to emphasize with this is that there is not a division of a unit, but a *generation* of unity of which a part is for the worker and another part is for the capitalist. Because if one simply looks at it as a division, it seems that there is a total from which one starts and has to fragment it. Then I am going to use the term "divided", but what I want to emphasize is that it is made up of these *two moments*. It is as the working day is extended, first a moment is generated and

then the second, there is no previous unity. Because then the exploitation of the worker in the capitalist mode of production would be a problem of distribution. And what Marx emphasizes (in the chapter at the end of Volume 3) is that it is not a problem of the distribution of the product of social labor, but of how social labor is organized.

Javiera: I understand the criticism, but I don't think that saying that he is exploited because they take away part of his work is a reference to something of distribution... The worker is exploited because of that.

JIC: No, it is exploited because it is *forced* to work harder than necessary to reproduce itself. Before, distribution appeared as if they took away a part of what it produced and what must be done is to reimburse what it produced. No: they *forced him to* work more than necessary to reproduce and that is why he is exploited. This is the difference.

There are those who say that Marx got the idea of surplus value from Ricardo, and it is the opposite. The first to talk about parts of the product of labor being deducted from him is Smith, who says: rent is the first deduction of the product of labor and profit is the second deduction. Later, as he realizes that this lends itself to one saying: "Then he is exploited because they take parts of what he produces," he constructs another explanation where he says that the salary is the only thing that is the product of work, profit and income is not. But here there is a substantial difference. The character of exploitation, I say again, is not a problem of distribution but of the way in which social production is organized, to which it corresponds, takes shape in that distribution, that the worker does not receive the full product of his labor, but that is the form, it is not the content of exploitation.

Marx will later refer to the fact that labor power is exploited by capital, and the worker by the capitalist. What issues does this entail? What Marx does not emphasize here, but when one reads it it refers to the closing of chapter IV, which referred to the forms taken by the buying and selling of labor power in circulation. And what Marx was proposing there is: this is the realm of human rights: freedom, equality, private property and personal interest. And this is where the vulgar economist goes to look for the secret of the movement of capital. But the problem is that when we looked at it in circulation this had no explanation, we had to go and look at the movement of capital where there was a qualitative difference, which was when it passed through the form of a commodity, and there had to be a commodity that produced more value than it cost (labor power) and we looked at the conditions of buying and selling labor power, etc., and the chapter closed by saying: now we have to get out of circulation and go to production.

When we enter production and arrive at this point where Marx synthesizes the question by saying: labor power is exploited by capital... What puts us in front of us is that production showed us something that when we looked at circulation seemed impossible: equality prevails there because equivalents are exchanged. And now when we look at production, what we find is that in the form of the exchange of equivalents, what is enclosed is that the worker gives more labor than he receives in exchange materialized in his means of subsistence. And that

therefore, in the form of an exchange of equivalents, what is enclosed is a non-equivalence. And consequently, what is enclosed is the exploitation of labor power by capital *or* of the worker by the capitalist.

And so we have this first evidence of the 4 appearances of circulation. Equality prevails, and this change of equivalents entails exploitation. It is not that the worker is exploited because he does not sell his commodity at the full value of that commodity, but that he is exploited because he sells his labor power for its value. If he sells it at a lower price, he will be more exploited, because a part of what would have been the necessary working day the worker will not receive the full value of what he produces during that part of the day and the rate of surplus value will be higher. But in normality, in what (I am going to take two expressions) is one of the origins of political economy, which is the problem of the "just price", the exchange of commodities for their value, the "just price" of labor power is the exploitation of the worker by capital (later I clarify why I synthesize it that way and do not say "by the capitalist").

This has a concrete manifestation, which in the case of Argentina has played a political role in its history, and we no longer even have the illusion, but it appears in the terms of what "social justice" is and that was achieved when 50% of the product was appropriated by the workers and 50% by the capitalists or it doesn't matter what subject. This implies a rate of surplus value of 100%: the workers work half the day for themselves and half for capital. And that is seen and longed for as the empire of social justice, because after that there is no more 50%/50%.

That is why it is not a problem of distribution, one has to look at it as an exploitation that arises from working more than what is socially necessary to reproduce that labor power. And so for me it is central, I always raise it in the workshops and in the courses to highlight this, the content of the first of the appearances in circulation was revealed. The appearance remains that freedom prevails, that private property based on one's own work prevails, that personal interest prevails. But what is clear is that equality prevails and *that is why the worker is exploited*.

Why do I have a certain resistance to respecting what Marx poses here, that labor power is exploited by capital or the worker is exploited by the capitalist? I summarize it in that the worker is exploited by capital, which is a social relation. It seems strange that a social relationship has the capacity to be exploitative in itself. But one has to remember that we saw capital as the concrete subject of this process of social life, of this way of organizing social production and consumption. And when one puts it as meaning that labor power is exploited by capital, a social relation appears that is exploiting what does not appear, so to speak, as a subject: because the worker is the subject in the materiality of the labor process, it is not his labor power that is the subject, but the worker who spends his labor power. And if one reduces it to the fact that the worker is exploited by the capitalist, one is erasing the specificity that the capitalist is not the subject of this way of organizing the life of society (we had seen this in Chapter IV): he is nothing more than the personification of this social relation. Every time I talk about this, I will miss saying that the worker is exploited by capital, because it is not a *personal problem* of the

capitalist, unlike the slave who is exploited by the master (it is a bond of personal dependence, the subject of exploitation is the master), the subject of the exploitation of the worker is capital, what the capitalist does is act as the conscience and will of that subject.

Then we are going to see what happens to the capitalist in his condition as a subject who personifies, not as a concrete subject of the content of the process, which is capital. Whose content in turn is that this is a process of human life, is it? And therefore the subject is the human being. But the inversion that occurs and that we saw when we started between subject and object with the commodity, here is in full version, we have already seen how capital uses living labor to preserve its value and valorize itself, it is dead labor that uses living labor, the inversion between subject and object is fully developed.

Javiera: I had doubts when you said that the worker is exploited by capital.

JIC: It sounds strange, because it's your own social relationship. But to say that labor power is exploited by capital, when it is not a social relation, but the capacity to work, which would then be exploited by a social relation... It's also not too fluid. The image appears very strongly that the subject of exploitation is the capitalist, which can feed the reduction of this inversion, that the problem is with the capitalist as a subject and not as a personification. Then the image appears that the capitalist is an individual lacking solidarity, as if it were a personal attribute that explains the existence of exploitation. But no: the capitalist is not supportive *because he is* the personification of capital. That is why I prefer to refer to it... The worker, who is a human subject, is forced to work. And this is its own social relation, capital is not a misfortune fallen from the sky, it is the social relation of the capitalist and the worker. It is the way in which the worker participates in the organization of his process of social life. As soon as he appeared here, all the concrete determinations of why he is the bearer of this social relationship will appear.

Gabriel: [...] Does dead labor have the potential to produce value? In a future where automation means that the worker is no longer the generalized source of value...

JIC: One has to start again from the beginning: this is the process of human life, of metabolism, which is sustained by work. Work has an individual and social character, as does consumption. The organization of each cycle of the process of metabolism is the unity between these double characteristics, the unity between social production and consumption. From the point of view of the unity of the process of social metabolism, to organize the process of production is to assign to each member of society what concrete useful labor he is going to do for the others, and consequently what product of the concrete useful labor done by others is going to be assigned to him for consumption.

In the capitalist mode of production there is no direct allocation based on the bonds of personal dependence. There is an indirect allocation which, when one takes it in the simplest form, its simplest determination, what it has is that at the

beginning of each cycle of production, there is no other social relation between the individual productive organs of society than in the fact that in the person of each of them there is a quota of the total working capacity of society to perform work in general. And each one assigns that quota under a specific useful form in a private and independent way. And consequently the unity between social production and consumption is established indirectly through the representation of SNALdPaI as the value of commodities. And therefore what is always at stake in the movement of value generation is the allocation of living labor.

The allocation of living labour entails the allocation to each productive member of society of the means of production necessary to carry out his labour. It is dragged by the generation of value how the means of production are going to be allocated, which are going to be assigned as products of a previous concrete useful labor (because they were already recognized as commodities) but now the materiality is going to be transformed, and we have to see if under that transformed materiality that previous labor is going to be recognized under this new material form as socially useful or not, that is why value is transferred to the value of the product.

The problem is how live work is allocated, not how dead work is allocated. Value is a social relationship between people that takes the form of no social relationship between people, but between things. The only subject of the process of human social metabolism is human beings. The means of production are not subjects, they are means. What is the inversion that one has? That these means appear inverted as if they were the material form that the subject has and as if the subjects were nothing more than the objects that the subject uses. But that is the inversion, it is not the content of this social relationship.

So, value only exists where there is living labor, where there is no living labor (it would be necessary to see if there is human life without productive expenditure of the human body), it would be necessary to assign means of production that even if they were assigned privately, and all that would happen is that they would transfer their value to that of the product, assuming that this could exist. There is no living subject there, there is no production of value, it would be a movement of value, a process of production without a subject: only means. It is debatable that a production process can be developed only with means of production without a productive subject to which it is necessary to assign what concrete useful work is going to be done by that productive subject that is going to use these means of production. All this will appear when we move forward next year.

What is happening with the materiality of work, what form is human work taking? It must be considered that Marx begins with the work of a private and independent producer who is the private owner of his own means of production, which is now *as if* he had split into the figure of the capitalist and the worker. But when we looked at the productive attributes of the worker and the value of labour-power, it appeared to be given because what we knew in the labour of the independent producer of commodities was the same as if he had become a labourer-selling labour-power: he continues to consume the same as before, he continues to work in the same way, only now he does it under the control of the

capitalist, he no longer has full control over his individual labor. It retains the control of a free individual but does not have full control because a part of it passed to the personification of capital, which is the capitalist. [...].

[II]

[General outline of the valorization process]

$$\rightarrow M - C \begin{cases} LP \\ MP \end{cases} \ldots P \ldots C' - M' \leftarrow$$

[5:15] This is an outline that Marx is going to make explicit in Volume 2, but it is the description of what we were seeing and it is extremely useful to make the presentation. It is the opening of the movement that Marx is going to put M-C, which becomes labor power (LP) and means of production (MP) that come out of circulation; and there is the production process (P), it develops and ends, and as a production process made privately and independently, what it produced are commodities, which, as one has already seen, what governs that process is the production of surplus value (*p*), which can only spring from the consumption of the use value of a commodity whose use value is to produce more value than it costs; and that, consequently, equivalents are exchanged in circulation, and valorization springs up in the process of production and at the same time appears to be realized in the process of circulation with the sale of the commodity for its increased value (M'), and the resumption of the movement which ended in the same form with which it began (C'), it is the objectified general social relation, and it is set in motion again.

$$\begin{matrix} \$4 & \$4 & \$4 \end{matrix}$$
$$\rightarrow M - C \begin{cases} LP \\ MP \end{cases} \ldots P \ldots C' - M' \leftarrow$$

I'm going to take, instead of 12 hours, something more moderate. Let us suppose that in order to produce the means of subsistence that the working family needs in order to have labor power to sell—here we are considering the simplest determination: a single seller of labor power in the family—4 hours of labor are necessary, that the product of the value produced in 1 hour of labor is expressed in $1 (peso) and that consequently the value of labor power is going to be $4. In this scheme we have the disbursement of $4 in the purchase of the labor force. And we have this deployment which is where I later have a problem that is not right, but let's see if it continues.


$0 ← 4h FT
$0 ← 1h FT 8ª hora 1hT → $1
$0 ← 1h FT 7ª hora 1hT → $1
$0 ← 1h FT 6ª hora 1hT → $1
$0 ← 1h FT 5ª hora 1hT → $1
4hT → $4
p
$4 ← 4h FT
$1 ← 1h FT 4ª hora 1hT → $1
$1 ← 1h FT 3ª hora 1hT → $1
$1 ← 1h FT 2ª hora 1hT → $1
$1 ← 1h FT 1ª hora 1hT → $1
4hT → $4
v

$0 ← 1h LP 8th hour 1hL → $1
$0 ← 1h LP 7th hour 1hL → $1
$0 ← 1h LP 6th hour 1hL → $1
$0 ← 1h LP 5th hour 1hL → $1

$1 ← 1h LP 4th hour 1hL → $1
$1 ← 1h LP 3rd hour 1hL → $1
$1 ← 1h LP 2nd hour 1hL → $1
$1 ← 1h LP 1st hour 1hL → $1

What happens in the 1st hour of the working day? The worker consumed 1 hour of labor power that is no longer in his body, which was the capacity to produce a value of $1, but since he effectively worked and spent his labor power productively, in that hour he produced a new value materialized in his product that corresponds to $1. If we look at the 2nd hour of work, the return worker had a capacity to produce a value of $1 [...][121]. And what we have is that there was in the worker's body the capacity to produce a value of $4, that capacity is no longer in the worker's body, but it has been objectified in the product as a new value of $4. And if we go back to the scheme, what we are going to have is that their product is taken into circulation, sold for its value, and that money did not function as capital. And this is what Marx is going to present in a diagram when he does the development (he does it about 6 hours), when the capitalist appears indignant because he has been cheated and risked his capital and receives nothing.

What I want to dwell on a little more, which when we look at the chapter I don't remember having developed, is what is the condition for surplus value to be produced. Because here everything that the worker produced (let's suppose that the whole working day is 4 hours), his labor power cost 4 hours, he worked 4 hours and produced a new value of 4 dollars that come to replace those that the capitalist had initially disbursed. What is the material condition for the possibility of capital valorization? And that condition is not specific to the capitalist mode of production, but is a general condition for one individual to be able to work without compensation for another.

And I usually explain this in the case of a father or a mother who has to produce for himself and for the children. Suppose that he works 4 hours, exhausted his labor power, and what he is going to have produced is the product of 4 hours, which is what he needs to consume in order to have labor power again. He goes back to work for 4 hours, he has a product, but it is the one he has to consume to work again for 4 hours. Under these conditions, this person can never work

[121] JIC continues until the synthesis of the first 4 hours of his working day.

without compensation for another person, be it the son, the capitalist, the lord... There is a technical starting condition for this work to take place without compensation, and Marx is going to illustrate it with the birds that would have to go without nests if it took them as long to build them as long as the nests last: the condition is that the productivity of labor is high enough so that with the product of *a part* of the working day, the individual is in a position to work a longer day.

If the individual produces in his working day enough product to simply replace the labor power that he has exhausted, then he can never work without compensation for another. He can work with counterpart: it may be that the product of 2 hours of his work is for him and the product of another 2 hours is for another individual, who in turn worked 4 hours, 2 for himself and 2 for him. But what is at stake here is that more value is produced than what was advanced, and consequently here there is a greater amount of work that materialized in the product than was materialized in labor power.

If we look at the initial scheme, we will assume that with the product of 4 hours of work the worker is now in a position to work an 8-hour working day. So, if we look at the movement that follows, in the worker there is no longer that labor power capable of producing $4 but he has produced a new value of $4 that covers the value of his labor power. And yet in his body remains the ability to continue working and in the 5th hour he applies 1 hour of labor power again, it materializes in his product generating a new value of $1, but now from the point of view of capital, having this hour of labor power cost him nothing. As soon as the working day continues, the worker continues to consume his labour-power, which is no longer in his body, but he continues to objectify himself in a new use-value bearing the value corresponding to 1 hour of labour ($1), but because he has this hour of labour-power the capitalist did not have to pay anything. With the 6th hour we have the same [...][122].


$0 ← 4h-FT
$0 ← 1h-FT 8ª hora 1hT → $1
$0 ← 1h-FT 7ª hora 1hT → $1
$0 ← 1h-FT 6ª hora 1hT → $1
$0 ← 1h-FT 5ª hora 1hT → $1
4hT → $4
p
$4 ← 4h-FT
$1 ← 1h-FT 4ª hora 1hT → $1
$1 ← 1h-FT 3ª hora 1hT → $1
$1 ← 1h-FT 2ª hora 1hT → $1
$1 ← 1h-FT 1ª hora 1hT → $1
4hT → $4
v

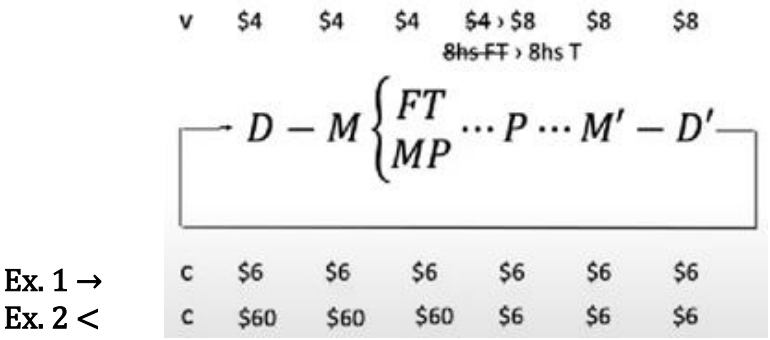
And here you have what we were seeing, and then in the last chapter Marx stops again, which is the division between necessary labor and surplus labor, the production of a new value that replaces that of labor power, and the production of a new value that has no counterpart. And this is where, if you look at the cycle, what you have is: the worker consumed 8 hours of labor power that cost capital $4. Since there is no more labor power in the worker's body, this $4 no longer exists, but since he worked 8 hours and produced a new value equivalent to the materialization of 8 hours of work and that is expressed in $8, when these $8 were

[122] And so on until the 8th. I put the above diagram again.

generated in production they are materialized in the M', it is taken into circulation and sold for its value which is $8 and here the capital was valued, where what Marx is going to refer to as value (variable capital) appears because what is expected of this magnitude is that it acts as a progressive, variable magnitude. In the schema what it has is: in the first 4 hours the worker replaces the value that no longer exists because the labor power is not in the worker's body, and produces this new value without counterpart which is the *p* and what we have is the rate of surplus value as an expression of the valorization of v:

$$p' = \frac{p}{v}$$

The mass of surplus value over variable capital, surplus labour over necessary labour, surplus product (material content of this) over the product necessary to reproduce labour power. And this is where one has this thing that in the form of the exchange of equivalents, it is the exploitation of labor power by capital, of the worker by the capitalist.



This is the scheme of the movement of constant capital (*c*), which is considered in the first example as a constant capital put into raw materials whose use-value is consumed in its *entirety* [in P] each time it is wholly transformed into the new product, and consequently the value of that *c* [6$], provided that living labor is well done, it will be preserved by transferring it to the value of the product. The second is the case of an instrument of production whose use value is *consumed gradually* over a series of production cycles, here are assumed 10 cycles, and each time it is used it transfers $^1/_{10}$ of its value to the value of *the product*, which would be $20[123]. The *value product,* the new value that was produced, is this $8 [above the diagram, on the right]. Of these, $4 is intended to replace the value that was annihilated in the production process, and $4 constitutes the *p*. This was the simplified outline of what we were developing.

[123] From what he says, I deduce that he has the $6 of raw material from the first case:

$6 (*raw material*) + $6 (1/10 *instrument of T*) = $12c + $8 *new* value = $20 *value of the product*.

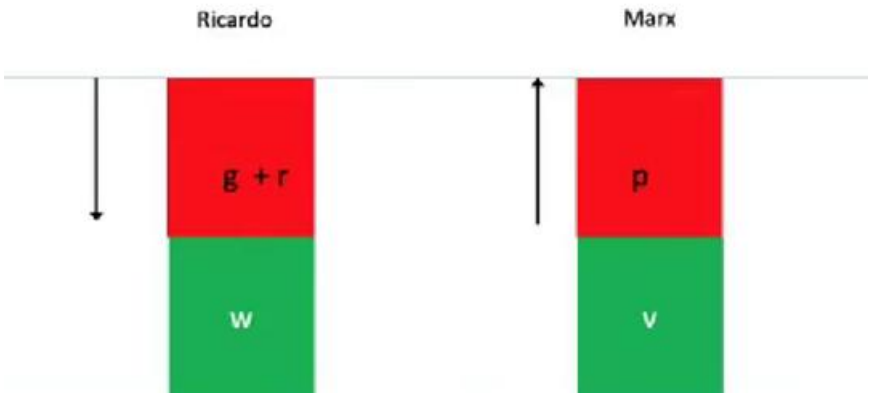
$$g' = \frac{p}{v + c}$$

Here what we have is the expression that Marx also takes not from the rate of surplus value but from the rate of profit: the relationship between p and circulation ($v + c$), the total capital that was advanced, that was set in motion to be valorized. Marx is going to make some observations on the relationship between the rate of surplus value and the rate of *g*, which we saw a little, and I don't remember if at the end there is the thing about the rate and the mass of *p*... [Ch. IX] It is a very short chapter, I skip the one on the working day [Chapter VIII] because now we are going to look at it.

Chapter IX. Rate and mass of surplus-value.[124]

$$p' = \frac{p}{v}$$

And when he looks at the movements of the rate of *p*, the first observation he is going to make is that it is false to compute the relation between surplus value, that is, between surplus labour and the sum of total living labour, as if it were a fraction of the working day. The expression of what proportion corresponds to the capitalist of the product of living labour and what proportion it is for the worker, makes the exploitation of the worker by capital appear as if it were a question of distribution. There is a new value, the product of the entire working day ($p + v$), and then each fragment is related (necessary labor or *v*, surplus labor or *p*),[125] it seems a problem of how this total product is distributed. And here there is a substantial difference between Ricardo's approach (not in those terms, in fact Adam Smith begins with it)... [...][126]:



I take Ricardo because there are those who claim to be Ricardians and talk about exploitation. But in reality the development is implicit in an explanation Smith gives about what happens to the total product and how it is appropriated. And that explanation has this: w is the product of value, the new value that was generated. In Smith's explanation, which Ricardo is going to take, all the "exchange-value" of the commodity is the product of labor. And what Smith is going to say is that two parts are deducted from the product of labor: (1) the profit on capital and (2) the rent of land. And that consequently what the worker has left is the residue of the deduction of g + r. When Smith finishes making that statement, he is frightened by what he himself has said and makes another statement that kicks with that one, saying that here there are 3 components independent of each other, that each of them has a natural price and that when they are added together, the value of the commodity is obtained: 1) wage rate, 2) profit rate and 3) rent rate.

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[124] Ahead of Chapter VIII, which is developed below.
[125] "*V*" and "*P*" are the expression in value of necessary labor and surplus labor.
[126] He realizes that it is repeating, but that we did not see the scheme and he is going to show it.

And he is going to arrive at the contradiction of saying, when he looks at this [The Whole Column], that everything is the product of labor, and the worker does not receive the full product of labor [w] (explanation 1). When you look at the 2nd, you will say: only w is a product of work, g + r are not. This is the way to explain the exploitation that Ricardians have: it is a problem of income distribution. The expressions that go further in the proposal, what they say is that the distribution of income depends on the class struggle and that the problem that exists in society is one of distribution. To divide it in this way is that the red part corresponds to the capitalist and the landowner, and the green part to the worker.

Marx's approach is absolutely different. He begins by saying: this is the necessary labor, the amount of labor that the worker has to render in order to reproduce his life. And it is not that something is deducted from him, it is that he is forced to continue working the surplus day. It is not a problem of distribution, because one does not start from a product that is naturally given, but arrives at that product on the basis of the exploitation of the worker by capital, of prolonging the worker's working day. This is implicit in the scheme with which Marx begins chapter VIII of the working day, where what he is going to say is that here there is necessary work and it extends to a point, or further, or more... But it is not a day *divided* into two parts, it does not exist as a starting unit: it is *made up* of a necessary labor time and another that works for free for the capital in which it produces surplus value. Proposals appear that, on the basis of this, say that the problem is one of distribution, and when wages grow more and more, the worker will stop being exploited and the capitalist mode of production will end. And in Marx's development it is not a problem of distribution: exploitation is inherent in the capitalist mode of production, it is based on the prolongation of the working day, on the development of surplus labour, not on a deduction of a part of the product of labour.

Edgardo: There are proposals that say that exploitation in the capitalist mode of production is equivalent to theft, that capital or the capitalist steals a part of the value generated by the worker. It seems to me that it is putting it in terms of distribution, it sounds similar to the Ricardians. But I remember that, in a part of the *Grundrisse*, Marx says that the basis of bourgeois production is the theft not of the product, theft of the value generated by the worker, but of the labor time of others when the worker is forced to work beyond the necessary labor time.

JIC: Yes... The term "theft" to explain this is a term that in fact appeared in Proudhon (private property is theft), and Marx criticizes it: it appears as a moral condemnation, theft in the world of individuals who see themselves as naturally free, private owners of their own means of production, who organize their social labor privately and independently, the only source of appropriation of the product is through labor. We raised this when we looked at chapter IV, Marx leaves it in: private property, of the rights of man proclaimed by the French Revolution.

Thus, theft, in the face of the abstract naturalization of the free individual, appears as an attack on the nature of the free individual, and since the relationship

of social interdependence is presented as external and has to be incorporated into individual subjectivity because it cannot simply be governed externally, but has to be carried in the subjectivity of each one, what appears is the representation of that social bond in ethics and the incorporation of that representation in morality. The term "theft" appears as if it were a moral problem, which are problems of a free conscience that does not recognize itself in its condition of alienation, its social relations are presented to it in the form of morality. It is a term that lends itself to being emptied of content.

When we get to Volume 3 there is a whole discussion that refers to the form that the value of commodities takes as a product of capital, and the form that p takes as *g*, and where there is a whole series of proposals that, on the basis of forcing determinations, state that Marx was wrong to make a development on a concrete form, [...] that when the model of the concrete form cannot satisfy the assumptions and criteria with which it is armed, although it could satisfy them in the simplest form, that model is false or redundant, and consequently Chapter I of *Capital* is wrong and useless. In a Marxist magazine called *Capital & Class*, an article came out when the discussion was very much in vogue (1980s-90s), saying that Marx had to be freed from this error of posing the determinations of value by socially necessary abstract labor, that this was shown to be trivial or redundant or false. that Marx had to be freed from all development on value. And what was left? The moral condemnation of capitalism. And if there is something missing in the development of *Capital*, beyond when Marx explodes against the concrete forms that the capitalist mode of production takes, that it is very difficult to remain serene, and an expression of horror and rejection of what lies ahead appears... Well, what this Marxist author is proposing is that the only thing that must be left out of Marx is that condemnation of Marx. And then the use of the term "theft" appears as part of the moral condemnation. That's why I don't think it's a good term, it's not rigorous about what's in front of it.

And it is clear that in Marx this "theft" did not bring into play a moral problem. What it brings into play is a problem of what form the social relationship has, where it is moving and who is the subject of that path of the social relationship. Now: use the term. And my position is that when you find a term, a development, whatever... It always has to subject to criticism the development that is the product of social labor and has an objectified existence as Marx does in his texts, precisely demanding that they give an account of what one is facing in the real movement. It is not a problem of interpreting what is in the text, but of knowing for oneself armed with the development that is in the text, in a process of recognition from the social point of view, knowing the determinations of one's own subjectivity.

In this process, when one of these proposals appears, he has to subject it to criticism, especially when it ends... One can say: it is a harmless proposal, not rigorous, it is clear what he meant... But it lends itself to being used precisely to make Marx say the opposite of what is the development that he is unfolding. It is not enough to say: "Marx said *a*, but he meant *s*": what he said is what he said. The problem that one has is the concrete that one is facing and whether one can appropriate it in a process of recognition from the social point of view because the development that Marx makes allows one to efficiently reproduce that same

development, or the concrete that one has in front of one does not correspond to the development that Marx makes and then one has to produce knowledge that is new, original, from the social point of view.

I in my book *Knowing Capital Today. To use Capital critically*, with respect to what the previous edition was, I added an observation about the way in which Marx exposes himself as he goes on to discover the substance of value, of SNALdPaI, where there is an exteriority in the presentation, an affirmation, not a display of why. If we look at the commodity and abstract it from all its physical qualities that make it a use-value, the only thing that remains is that it is the product of human labor. And if we also empty that human work of qualities, it is abstract human work.

One of the founders of the Austrian School named Von Bawerk grabs from that (and it has an immediate and marked political significance in Argentina and I think in the world today) to say: Marx grabbed work but there are a lot of qualities that the commodity has, why work? One can also say: if you abstract all the concrete qualities, the only thing left for the commodity is to be useful in general, to be scarce in general, and that would be the quality to be taken as the determinant of value. The Austrian School was in decline for many years, even within the most vulgar political economy of vulgarity, it was seen as a kind of "poor relative" that did not have much space. And in the 1970s it began to take off (one must think of the Pinochet dictatorship, Hayek and Mises collaborating with the economic plan in Chile and Brazil) and today it is the basis of these subjects who appear with their discourse.

For me, that form of exposition that Marx uses that does not prevent me from finding development, but that serves to question development, it seems to me that one has to subject it to criticism. And in fact, when we did the accompaniment, we first did the development as it is in chapter I and then we did a development that had a different character: I have to ask myself about the quality, I cannot directly affirm that the quality it has is this. And the same thing happens at the point where Marx affirms that only the products of private labor have value, it is also an external affirmation that serves to erase within Marxism itself that the specificity of labor in the capitalist mode of production is that it is a social labor done privately and independently. because it appears as if it were an observation and not a display of reason. The deployment is then much more complex, and then that complexity is appealed to to hide it.

Chapter VIII. The working day.[127]

[…] I had told them to notice that the form of exposition of chapter VIII is markedly different, except for part of the first section. There is a very broad development of concrete forms around the length of the working day. And given the value of the worker's labour-power, given the productivity of the labourer's labour (it was already placed in the development of the material conditions of the labour-process for capital), given the intensity of labour which corresponds to a given normal condition, the production of surplus-value, the degree of valorisation of value depends on the length of the working day. And then Marx, on the basis of these given determinations, is going to focus the question of how much capital can be valorized specifically on this point, on the basis of the length of the working day.

It is clear that if labor power has a certain value, that value is associated with a certain length of the working day. And since Marx was saying that this has a value, the working day had to be more or less implicit. Because if the worker works more, he spends more labor power, and the value of that labor power will be higher, and vice versa if the day is shorter. Marx is going to take this point of the length of the working day and, above all, what he is going to unfold then are the concrete forms that the determination of the normal working day takes. And he develops those concrete forms.

Normally, when we did it in person, this was much more dialogued, because the question was why they think it takes such a marked form of exposition, of so much deployment of concrete forms, and what is emerging from that development. So I invite you to ask yourself if this form of exposure tells you anything. I don't know who uses FCE's translation, the classic one from the mid-40s that continued to be republished identical to itself until a few years ago, where a translation that had been made by Roces himself, who died years ago, but who had made modifications to it and which we talked about in the first meeting, was published. And one of the things we talk about is that Volume 1 is not, but Volume 3 is full of typing errors, of translation that inverts the word that had to be inserted. And in this Volume 1, in this chapter there is one of those cases. And what we always do is, when we are advancing on a chapter where I have detected things that need to be modified, I warn them to correct it above their copy. In the new one it is corrected, in the old one there is a sentence that says: "I do nothing more than demand the value of my commodities like every buyer" and it had to say "[...] like every salesperson." [Answering the chat] In Siglo XXI I understand that the problem is not there. In general, there are no problems, in some cases there are. […]

We are going to go through it quickly and see what things appear as Marx makes this deployment, in the form of the unfolding of concrete forms. In fact, when it starts in the first sections, what will appear is the relationship between the capitalist and the worker as the relationship between buyer and seller. And how

[127] It is impossible to put each section, since JIC is going to jump through the entire concrete development of the struggle for the normal working day and so on. In the following sessions he returns to different questions, it seems that chapter IX is reduced to what we have seen here in advance and until session 35 §4 on relative surplus value is not dealt with.

each of them has to personify their commodity. As we looked at it in the simplest way, one personifies money and the other commodity. And what we had about the relation between the commodity possessor and the money-possessor, between seller and buyer, is that they have no personal relationship, they enter into this indirect relation established through the exchange of commodities — money, and they act as personifications each, one of the money that is going to function as capital, and the other of his labor power that he is going to sell as commodities. What is the character of this relationship then?

What Marx is going to start within this is: well, the capitalist buys the labor power for the value that corresponds to the working day, he has become the owner of the use value of that commodity for the time it has been sold, and in order to act properly as the personification of capital what he has to do is to make the worker-seller give him the greatest amount of use value possible by delivering as little value as possible. And this is what any buyer of commodities does. And in front of him is the worker who sells labor power who does what every seller of M has to do: he tries to get the full value of his commodity delivered to him, and the way to get it delivered to him is that, as the personification of that commodity, he tries to give up as little use-value as possible in exchange for as much value as possible. And what we have is the antagonistic relation between buyer and seller of commodities now in the concrete form of the antagonistic relation between capitalist and worker.

And Marx begins to unfold it in relation to the length of the working day, and what is going to emerge from this antagonistic relationship is... Two expressions are going to appear in the midst of this display of concrete forms. What it is going to say is: here buyer and seller, like all buyers and sellers, have the same right. Each one does what he has to do as the personification of his commodity, they have equal *and opposing rights*. And the synthesis he is going to make of this is: "Between equal and contrary rights, force decides."[128] And the exercise of force is going to take expression in the struggle that is going to unfold around the duration of the working day, and that is a struggle that is not simply one in which the individual capitalist confronts the individual worker, but from that development that was unfolding in concrete forms what emerges is that it is a struggle between the "universal capitalist", Because the antagonistic relation extends, it is not simply that of each worker with his capitalist, or of each capitalist with his worker, until it embraces on one side the universe of capitalists, that is, the capitalist class on the one hand, and on the other the universal worker, that is, the working class.

We had been seeing independent producers of commodities, individuals who established no other social relationship among themselves than through the exchange of commodities, that from this exchange what arose were antagonistic relations of competition between buyer and seller, and that now what was put forward through this development of concrete forms is that it exists by springing from this antagonistic social relationship between individuals reciprocally. a social relationship appears that encompasses the universe of individuals who are *classified* on one side or the other. And it is going to get to that through another

[128] Marx, K. (1977: 180), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE. [End of Chapter VIII.1.]

aspect that was not there until now, which is the regulation of the length of the working day. That is, the development also of a form of social relation, because it is a regulation that has a general validity, that does not have the scope of a relationship of an individual character, that is between the universal worker and the capitalist, and that contains a direct social bond, because there is a regulation that has a binding character for both. And then the development of this relationship will continue due to the regulation of the working day.

He had said that, by equal rights, what decides is force, and it is demonstrated in this concrete deployment that he is making, how with the development of the capitalist mode of production the isolated individual worker in his condition as a free seller of his labor power is totally defenseless against capital. The establishment of a normal working day can only arise from a long and difficult more or less covert "civil war" between the capitalist class and the working class. And here the class struggle appeared, looking at the concrete movement, this form of social relationship appeared, and where there could only be links between isolated individuals, because all the links were antagonistic and no one could associate with anyone, now, above the antagonistic link, which within the capitalist class is the competition to buy labor power... Sorry, I jump at the class thing: within the pole of the capitalists, and the antagonistic relationship within the pole of the sellers of labor power to sell their individual labor power, and what Marx is going to point out is that on the isolated sale of labor power the competition between workers arises.

Then, where there were only relations between individuals isolated from each other, these relations had an antagonistic character, now there is a relationship at each of the poles that is going to take the form of a relationship of solidarity, of a solid one where there could only be fragmented, isolated, mutually free individuals, and this on the side of the workers as well as on the side of the capitalists. A relationship that until now seemed impossible to be present in a way of organizing the life of society where the bonds had an antagonistic character and linked isolated individuals to each other. This relationship of solidarity *is not a substitute for competition*. To go and sell labor power all together as if it were one does not take away from the fact that each one as a reciprocally free individual needs to sell *his own labor power.* If the condition for selling labor power for its value is to establish the relationship of class solidarity because the competition that one had as an isolated individual made him isolated from the isolated capitalist, what we find is that this relationship of solidarity is a concrete form that the relationship of competition takes. If my competition with others is what makes me weak, that is the basic relationship. How can I solve it? I am an individual devoid of ties of personal dependence, isolated, the only way I can overcome my weakness is by giving that social relationship that makes me weak the form of a relationship in which we sell our labor power without confronting each other.

So, what is appearing through this history of the regulation of the working day [Sections 5-7] is: we have the classes here, we have the class struggle, the relationship that is going to constitute the classes, of solidarity and when it is looked at from the point of view of the workers, what makes it weak is its competition with the other workers and then it has to give that competition the

form of a relationship of selling labor power by competing and at the same time selling it all as if it were one.

Marx is going to take a step forward by marking something that he will later develop much more with his concrete forms. The second appearance presented by the purchase and sale of labor power in circulation, which was freedom, that the worker was a free individual and freely sold his labor power, what Marx is going to propose is: now, once he has sold it, the worker is not a free agent. That at the moment when he exercises his freedom by selling his labor power, is the moment when he is forced to sell it because he is free and has no other social bond, the only thing he has is the sale of this commodity, and consequently, under the appearance of being a free individual he is a forced laborer.

The next step that will appear in the unfolding is that this relation which the workers establish as a class is not born of an abstract will, but as a necessity, a power that springs from the very movement of capital. And that this need is presented to the workers themselves as a social power that is external to their individual will. I read the quote from the text:

> In order to "defend" themselves against the serpent of their torments, the workers have no choice but to tighten the siege and wrest, as *a class*, a law of the state, an *insurmountable social obstacle* that prevents them from selling themselves and their offspring as meat of death and slavery *through a free contract with capital*. And so, where the pompous catalogue of the "Inalienable Rights of Man" once stood, now appears the modest *Magna Charta* of the legal working day.[129]

And in this text, which emerges from the development of concrete forms, a new subject appears, the bearer of a social relationship that is not a bond of personal dependence, but is a social relationship that has to *appear* as an external objectified existence that has the power to impose itself on free individuals as personifications. on his abstract free will. The social relationship that, Marx is going to put it as a "law of the state", is a social obstacle that prevents them from selling themselves through a free contract between personifications. That personification that until now simply established its social bond according to the needs of its commodity, is now found to be the bearer of an impersonal social bond that imposes itself in general, and that there is a subject that is not a personal form either, it is a social relationship that has an objectified existence, which is the state. And this is what springs from this development that Marx unfolds on the concrete forms that this struggle for the duration of the working day takes.

There are several issues here. The first is: why this form of deployment? Did Marx need it because that was how he could get there? Did you voluntarily say, "I want to get to this and I'm going to get it this way"? Marx would know why he did it the way he did. There is even a version (I don't remember where it comes from, from a biography or...) that, as he had a lot of this written, he was sorry not to publish it and so he put it there; and another in which he says that this was how he gave volume to the book so that it would be important. Marx would know the

[129] Marx, K. (1977: 241), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

reasons. The problem is what confronts us with what is appearing here, what forces us to answer ourselves. And to say: well, then what is this determination?

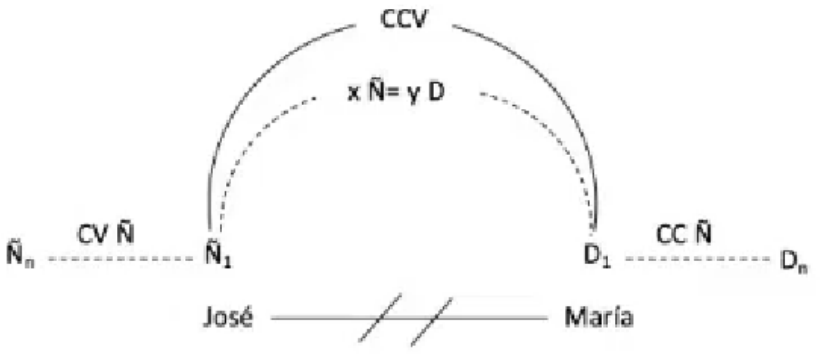
One of the things that is going to appear very markedly is that in the face of many statements that say that Marx only deals with social classes, in the last chapter of Volume 3, in a page and a half called "The Social Classes" and that is interrupted in development, and that is all he says beyond naming them. At the beginning of Volume 1, what he is saying is what is a first determination of social classes. There is another version that says that Marx does not develop the state, and here in this chapter what appears... A state already appeared in the function of money as a standard of prices, which had to be imposed externally, have a character of universal validity within the national sphere. But here there appears a state that refers not simply to a formal question, but to how the capitalist mode of production moves, and the need for the state not as a formal need, but as a condition that capital sets for its reproduction [...].

[Unity of the general social relation. Class struggle, state, and citizenship.]

[...] I had proposed that we look again... Marx makes development from concrete forms. The content that has that concrete form appears, which is not simply the description of what is happening, but here there is an antagonistic relationship that reaches the universal worker and the universal capitalist, that this relationship has the form of "[...] a more or less covert civil war", [130]and it appears as a necessity of the movement itself of the indirect general social relation that the fixing of the duration of the working day should take the form of a direct social relation which has a forced character, has an immediate, general social validity, which is the action of the state, and which presents itself as a direct imposition expressing a need of the universal worker himself in the form of a need of capital.

So what I had proposed to you is to go through these determinations again, but not by taking a display of concrete forms, but by going to the content of why the need for the indirect relationship through the exchange of commodities to take the form of a direct relationship between those who personify the commodities, but that the social relation transcends individual bonds and the universal worker and the universal capitalist appear as personifications. and the state appears. Are they movements external to the movement of the general social relation itself, or are they the necessary concrete forms in which the unity of the process of social metabolism is realized? […]

Organic unity of the social relation between commodity producers: production and circulation.



We started by representing the social bond between 2 people, because what one always has in front of you is how human beings organize our process of social life under the capitalist mode of production, the allocation of the labor power of the individual productive organs of society, and consequently, how we organize the consumption of the products of that social labor. What one always has in front of you is that it is a social relationship between people.

[130] Marx, K. (1977:38), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

Today I took Joseph and Mary, two people who have no direct personal ties. They are organs of a process of social metabolism that does not take shape through direct personal ties. It takes shape through the fact that Joseph and Mary work for each other privately and independently, and consequently their social bond takes the form of an indirect relationship (hence the dotted line) between things, commodity, which were the 10G and the pair of *S*. We saw that this determines José as the personification of his commodity, that is why we called him "Mr. Gnocchi", and María "Mrs. Shoes".

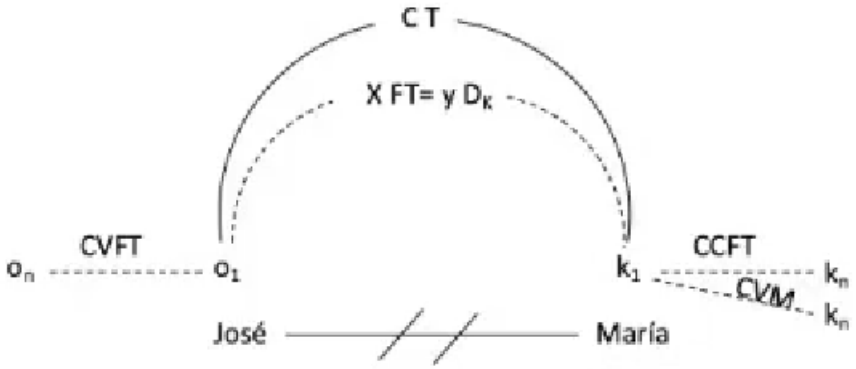
If Chapter I goes this far, Chapter II contains the contract of sale (CCV). Marx is going to put it as saying that commodities cannot go to the commodity alone, they will be taken by their owners. If the commodities refuse, they can be forced. And immediately afterwards (there it appears as an abstractly free consciousness) what appears is that they have to act as personifications of their commodity, and that as such they relate directly in a conscious and voluntary relationship that is the CCV. Already in Chapter II Marx makes an observation saying that the CCV is a legal relationship in which this indirect relationship ($10G = 1S$) takes shape that is realized through the production and exchange of commodities. But I leave it simply named.

When we started in Chapter III, it was no longer simply the confrontation between two commodity owners, it was the relationship between someone who owned commodities and someone who owned money. What we had is that x amount of G was exchanged for a quantity y of money and that Maria had sold shoes before and we have the direct relationship between the personifications of the commodity and the conscious and voluntary money in the purchase contract. When we continued advancing in chapter III, it appeared to us that commodities were not sold for their value simply automatically and it was already clear that the relationship between buyer and seller was antagonistic, but not personal but as personifications, there is a need for those who personify their commodities to face an interest opposed to the one who is going to exchange the commodity for money.

First they were producers of commodities, when we passed into circulation they began to be named as possessors of commodities because it is not clear where each one got the commodity or money he is carrying. But the relationship was antagonistic. And this is the universal relation, because every individual operates as an individual organ of the process of production, and every person operates as an individual organ of the consumption of the products of social labor. But when this question arose of the relation between the size of the solvent social need and the quantity produced because unity is established indirectly, the commodities could be sold above or below value, so that those who sold below value put in a greater quantity of social labour than they received in return. and those who sell above the value put a smaller amount and receive a larger amount in return. And we saw it as an antagonistic relationship between sellers of the same commodity, we had extended it to complementary or substitute commodities and we had said that this is universal. We compete more immediately with those who sell the same commodities, but the competition extends among all the sellers of the commodities, and we had the same from the point of view of the buyers of the commodities. So we have in the capitalist mode of production only antagonistic relations: between

buyers and sellers, between sellers among themselves and between buyers among themselves.

Organic unity of the general social relation.



We are going to look at this very thing, but now not simply as a relation between private and independent producers, but as a relation in which the seller, as the starting-point of the organization of each cycle of the process of social metabolism, the commodity he has to sell is his labour power and is bought with money which is to function as capital.

And then we have Joseph and Mary again, which is the relationship they have with each other as people, but which has the form of no personal bond. They are indirectly related because Joseph, in his condition as a worker, sells an x amount of labor power that Mary, in her condition as a capitalist, pays him with an amount *and* money that will function as capital. This indirect relation, mediated by the exchange of one thing which is labour-power and another which is money, determines the seller of labour-power as labourer, the purchaser of labour-power as capitalist, personifications of labour-power and capital which go into circulation, enter into a conscious and voluntary direct relation of buying and selling, but which now takes the form of the labour-contract. where the worker has sold his labor power for a certain period. And here what we are always looking at is considered in its simplest expression that sells its labor power for its value.

Obviously the relationship between capitalist and worker is antagonistic. In Chapter V we saw that this antagonistic relationship takes place not only at the moment of buying and selling, but also throughout the working day because the delivery of the use value of labor power for capital is that it becomes the greatest possible amount of living labor that materializes in its product generating new value. And then we had: the relation between worker and capitalist is a definite concrete form which has the same root, the same content in what we know so far, as the relation between buyer and seller of any commodity.

What does Marx show us in the development of this chapter on the working day? It is the atomization of workers competing with each other to sell their labor power, which appears in the form of a competitive relationship. Here it is also manifest that workers who have a more similar labor force compete more directly and those who have a labor force that is differentiated, the competition is more

distant. But all workers compete with each other to sell their labor power. And on the side of the capitalists they are all buyers of labor power, they have an antagonistic relationship over who buys labor power, a sharper antagonism between those who buy labor power that is most similar. There is another relation which it is useful for me to note when one is looking at the development of the unity of the general social relation: that capitalists are all competitors with each other because they are all commodity sellers. Except for labor power, what they sell is another type of commodity, but we synthesize as "commodity sellers" in general.

So, there is the same competition that the simple producers of commodities had, but it is universal. There are other relations of competition: workers compete with each other because they are buyers of means of subsistence, capitalists because they are all buyers of means of production and means of subsistence (the part of surplus value that they are going to consume individually), and if workers and capitalists consumed the same means of subsistence, they would compete with each other as buyers of those means of subsistence.

[Answering Javiera] The capitalist is going to buy something that is going to be a means of subsistence for himself and another capitalist also wants to buy it. And then it may happen that there are too many capitalists willing to buy that commodity and that there is not enough production. So the way to settle which of them is going to get that livelihood is going to be through the price is going to go up and some are going to get to the point where they're going to say, "Well, at that price above value, it's not a livelihood for me" and they're going to withdraw. So the same thing works for them as buyers of means of production as long as they use the same means of production. All capitalists consume fuel, energy sources, they have an antagonistic relationship of competition with each other because they would like to be the only ones who want the fuel, because then it would be surplus and sold below value. And apart from that, the capitalist who buys fuel has an antagonistic relationship with the one who sells it.

Javiera: I understand that they compete for the purchase of labor power but I wonder: if capital has as a normal condition the production of surplus labor power...

JIC: No, that's not up to here, now let's look at it.

Javiera: Another question: if in capitalism all relations are antagonistic, are we referring here only to the relations that occur in the process of buying and selling labor power? Would relationships within a family, a couple for example where both are sellers of labor power, enter into an antagonistic relationship of competition?

JIC: The thing is like this: here there are no ties of personal dependence. That's why I took it because if not, one is already looking at concrete ways. This is the universal bond. One enters into these antagonistic relationships not as a person but as a personification. I take it in very abstract terms: personally he does not have any personal problems with anyone, because there are no bonds of personal

dependence. But what is the character of the general social bond? It is a bond of antagonism as personifications. One has antagonistic links as personification with *all the other* personifications. Even if you don't even have them in mind, as it is an impersonal social relationship, you have that bond beyond the possibility of your personal bonds, so it tends to be a universal bond, it is not mediated by the personal figure of each individual organ within social life.

Now: you go a step further, that at this point we do not have the concrete determinations and we also saw something when we saw the reproduction of labor power, which is: this is the general social relationship and as concrete forms of it appear the bonds of personal dependence. And then even the bonds of personal dependence are governed by this impersonal social bond. Thus, since the most general determination is that of the impersonal bond, effectively within a couple that both are sellers of labor power, there is already an antagonistic relationship of competition. The bonds of personal dependence depend on the concrete conditions of reproduction of labor power and so on gives them a peculiar form, but the possibility of this couple reproducing their life first passes through the possibility of selling the commodities, in this case labor power.

We are looking at the simplest form, which is the purity of the indirect social relation mediated by commodities. Later, when we advance further on a whole series of determinations that lead us to concrete forms, but so far it is this: as personifications, all our bonds are antagonistic, the most general way of relating socially is as personifications. So it is a war of all against all. Marx is going to make the figure because Adam Smith says it is: well, from the fact that each one pursues his personal interest and has no personal link with others, one cannot expect the kindness of the baker, etc. to provide us with those things, one has to appeal to his personal interest to satisfy one's own personal interest, and he will conclude that it is as if there were an invisible hand from which springs the greatest general welfare. And what Marx puts about a war of all against all... the greatest general well-being does not necessarily arise. So it's this, let's take it in the purity of this relationship.

We return to the eastern scheme. When one looks at what gives it unity, what it is that governs these universally antagonistic relations, what we have is the movement of capital:

$$\circlearrowright\ D - M \begin{cases} FT \\ MP \end{cases} \cdots P \cdots M' - D'$$

El capital es la relación social objetivada que tiene la potestad de poner en marcha el trabajo social de manera privada e independiente con la finalidad inmediata, no de producir valores de uso para el consumo humano, sino de producir más de la misma relación social objetivada

When one looks at capital, what one has is that it does the same thing as a subject: it appropriates the means for which it has to spend itself, once it has the material form of labor power, it annihilates itself in the production process in order to produce more of itself. And this is what we had looked at very early on: they are the conditions of reproduction of any living subject. You need to advance in the ability to reproduce yourself. What does a metabolism process have to do? It has to be spent to transform something that allows it to reproduce itself by expanding its capacities for that reproduction.

And there is something that I said, because I did not want to use this scheme that Marx uses in Volume 2, this is the deployment of M-C-M', of what happens in circulation, but Marx in Volume 1 is going to see what happens in the production process, so he had not wanted to show it to respect Marx's course. But when you look at it like this, what you have is that capital is not simply money, value that is valorized. The content is not exhausted there, that is the form that the movement takes, in money that produces more money or surplus value. It is a social relationship that sets in motion each cycle of the process of production of human means of life with the immediate aim not of producing use value, but of surplus value, of valorization.

But one can look even further inside, and when one says that it is a social relation, what one is saying is that it is a way of organizing the process of social life, that it sets in motion that process of social life in order to multiply the capacity to set in motion the process of social life as if it had as its immediate purpose simply that multiplication. without immediate unity between this process of social production and that of social consumption.

I put this diagram here to emphasize that the immediate purpose of social production is the production of surplus value. And I am going to look at the question of the concrete forms that the buying and selling of labor power takes, not with respect to the length of the day, but to the content of the process of valorization. What is at stake is the multiplication of capital. It is exactly the same as if I were looking at the length of the day, but it always seemed more expressive to me to go to the axis of what is at stake here. And what one has in front of you is that the movement of multiplication of surplus value, of the transformation of surplus value into new capital, that is, of the accumulation of capital, flows.

The flow of accumulation has a general condition, which is that capital always has labor power. If some means of production are lacking, the valorization in the branches that use it, which may be more or less universal, is interrupted. But if capital lacks labour power, it cannot be set in motion in general. Consequently, if the immediate aim is to multiply capital, capital must always have at its disposal a mass of labour-power which satisfies this possibility of always being set in motion. And what we have in front of us is an automatic way of organizing the life of society, where there is no determination that says: for there to always be labor force available, it has to be multiplied today in this proportion, tomorrow in this... and it is directly governed that there is always a workforce available. Simply with what we have so far, in any system that regulates itself automatically, the way to

always have the essential element for general movement is to have a lung, a quantity of labor power that is always available so that if capital needs it it has somewhere to take, and that if you have more than enough to put it, incorporate it into the lung and maintain the fluidity of the movement. If one always has a reservoir where there is that element that is essential for movement, fluidity is permanent.

And I always find it very illustrative to point out how clear the need for this lung is, that when the unemployment rate (a measure of the ratio between the labor force that is applied and that which is in the warehouse) falls below 3-4%, the economists who are the spokesmen of capital say that there is full employment and that it has problems getting the labor force it needs. And what one is looking at is that capital has 3-4% of the labor force to spare. So, it's not enough, you need more to have left over so that your accumulation process can flow smoothly. Since this is the concrete subject of the unity of the process of social metabolism, the general social relation, in order to be able to flow into the production of means of subsistence for human life for the purpose of the valorization of capital, requires that labor power always be produced in excess of the quantity required by capital at a given time.

Javiera: If a "lung" is always being generated there in reserve, surplus, it is not so clear to me about competition for the purchase of labor power.

JIC: There are differences in the workforce, the competition is closer between those who use the same workforce, we have to see where that workforce is because it may be that in a certain circumstance the lung is on one side but not on the other. It is a general relationship (now we are going to see the forms that this relationship of competence takes) that precedes the evidence that it needs to be left over. Competition is always present in that purchase.

Iván: I have many friends who constantly think about leaving the country and advertisements begin to appear in newspapers in places (Spain and other countries) that "accept" Argentina. And the peculiar thing about when one sees what they "accept" from the Argentines or which Argentines are interested in leaving, the figure of programmers, computer technicians always appears... A working class that is very specialized and highly trained in these tasks. And in parallel to the fact that I was seeing all this, there was a meeting of Argentine businessmen and one of the concerns they took was the need for technicians and programmers not to leave, which Argentine capitalism also requires. And in the midst of all this context, I was having a meeting of state workers and one of the problems they expressed is that there were no programmers for the faculty, so that they could maintain the page of the universities, and so on. And I think that here could be an example where we see this already global competition for a certain workforce and how smaller capitals such as those operating in Argentina begin to be harmed by the migration of this labor force and do not find mechanisms to maintain it, especially because of wage disparities, and so on.

JIC: These are forms of that competition. You reminded me of other forms, Argentine history is full of those expressions. But Marx makes an observation

about a crisis (I think the cotton or wool crisis) where the workers are going to migrate from the place where they are because there is no buyer for the labor force and the capitalists of the place, of that branch, ask parliament to prohibit the migration of the workers. And in the case of Argentina, at the beginning of the 20th century, when in the Chaco cotton plantations were being developed with the native population converted into labor force for capital in conditions of forced labor even, and in Tucumán (which is next to the Chaco, where sugar cane was grown) they needed labor power for the sugar harvest and the sugar capitalists tried to attract that force The capitalists of the Chaco, which was under military rule (it was a national territory) and sent him a letter where he said: the Indians of the Chaco are ours, so they cannot be allowed to go to the sugar harvest. And they had them effectively locked up in the reductions.

What Marx saw of the cotton or wool workers in England, in Argentina there is an example that says the same literally. "Those workers are ours", they are not shared with other capitalists because there is an antagonistic relationship due to the disposition of that labor force. And now we're going to look at the concrete ways in which that competence *seems* as if it's denied, but it's always within this relationship.

Edgardo: This lung of systematically unemployed labor force has a global dimension, doesn't it? Ivan's example is an expression of that. In other words, the change in the migratory measures of the countries also expresses that.

JIC: Exactly, with a much greater complexity than what we are looking at here. Just as Marx makes that statement where he says that a direct producer separated from his means of production is not the result of nature, he has to be the result of a long historical process in which he was separated from his means of production, and then he says: we are going to do the same as the capitalist does. The capitalist does not care why there are doubly free workers, the only thing that matters to him is that there are. So up to this point it is not explained where this surplus worker comes from.

Later in development it will appear how capital does... Up to this point it appears as a condition external to the movement of capital (like everything that appeared in development essentially) that will later be transformed when we enter the section of relative surplus value. How does capital manage to have it left over? Later we are going to see it, and what happens with that, which substantially transcends what we are looking at. Because unemployment rates are not 4%-5%, universally today they are above 10% (and with all kinds of manipulations to lower them). Then we're going to come to all those determinations, but now let's just take it in purity, the simplest form of this determination. Let's put the axis in which capital needs labor power that it has to spare. What then happens to the reproduction of labor power?

What is going to happen is that in order for it to be left over, it is a commodity that has to be produced in a quantity greater than what corresponds to the social need that is solvent by it *at its value.* If it systematically has to be left over, it is systematically overproduced, and competition among workers over who sells their

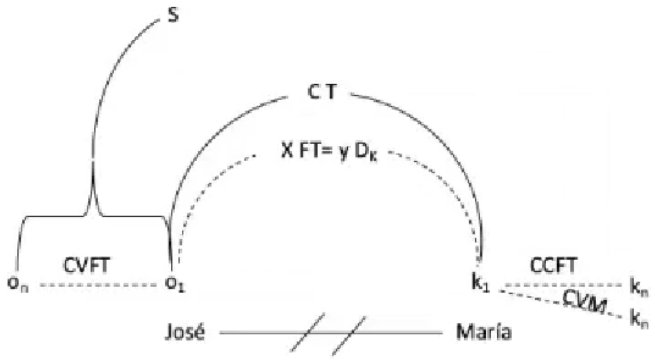
individual labour power will lead to labour power being systematically sold below value. It is obvious that this means a deterioration in living conditions for the worker. And if we look at the individual capitalists, what we are going to see is that for them this situation in which labor power is sold below its value is a party, because the rate of surplus value increases.

I always make a disquisition at this point about what the dream of the capitalist is: the forced labor camps of Nazi Germany, where there is a labor force that comes with productive attributes in which it does not have to be spent on producing it, it is consumed with all the immediate intensity, it is exhausted at an accelerated rate. and once it is exhausted, capital does not have to spend on keeping those subjects alive: it annihilates them. One has to remember that Mr. Henry Ford was an admirer of Hitler, because he was realizing the dream of the individual capitalist: when his labor power is exhausted, he takes another mass of labor power that cost him nothing to produce, and he does the same while he can sustain that movement.

But there is another social subject which is not the workers or the individual capitalists, but which is the movement of the unity of the process of social metabolism: it is the unity of the production and reproduction of the process of valorization of capital. What is going to appear here is not simply individual capitals (until now they were the concrete subject of the implementation of social production), but here what we have is the unity of this process of social metabolism that has the form of the total capital of society.

What happens if labor power is systematically sold below its value? It will lose the productive attributes that capital demands of it and will reach a point where it needs labor power to surplus, but at the same time that it reproduces itself under normal conditions and is normally sold for its value. Then we find that the concrete subject of this process of social life is not individual capitals, but the unity of this process of social metabolism, and this unity is the total capital of society or social capital. And that it is a necessity of the total capital of society. So how does this contradiction play out? Who is the subject who carries this contradiction?

Up to this point, the total capital of society has no expression of its own. But this aspect of the necessity of the totality of the capitals of society cannot be found in the individual capitalists either. Because if an individual capitalist is aware of the need for labor power to reproduce normally and pays his workers the value of that labor power, his competitors who can dispose of labor power by paying it below value will see the valorization of their capital multiplied and in the long run in competition will end up defeating it. Therefore, individual capitalists cannot themselves be the subjects through which this contradictory need for the total capital of society develops. What other concrete subject do we have left as a possible carrier of this? He is the one who suffers the consequences of the first need for capital (which is left over by the FT), and at the same time he is the immediate bearer of the second need of the total capital of society: that labor power be sold normally for its value. And that other subject is the workers.



Actually, the graph is wrong. I always promised myself to correct it and I didn't, because here I put the competition as sellers of labor power (CVFT), and I lacked the full line that corresponds to that direct relationship between personifications, the same as here (CCFT, CVM). There is a line that is the conscious and voluntary relationship in which a worker fights with another in order to sell his labor power.

Where does the possibility of capital selling labor power below value come from? Of competition among workers because there is a surplus of that labor force. Consequently, the way to develop the sale of labor power surplus by its value is that instead of selling labor power individually, they would sell it as if it were a single one, that is, that the competition to sell labor power take the form of a relationship of solidarity. transform the separate, competing labor power into a solid, single seller of labor power. So, what we are going to find is that through this relationship of solidarity what the workers are doing is carrying in their action as personifications a power that is proper to the total capital of society.

It is not that competition has disappeared: within it what it has is the competition to sell its own labor power. For the individual worker, the fact that others sell their labor power and that individual worker cannot sell it is not the solution of his situation. Therefore, the relationship of solidarity is a form that the relationship of competition takes. If one looks at this relationship of solidarity, in very broad terms, one can see that it has different scopes depending on the scope of competition between workers. Who competes most immediately? The workers who are going to sell their labor power to the same capitalist. What is at stake there is: of all those who put themselves in line for employment, who is going to be able to sell their individual labor power to that individual capitalist. And very roughly the concrete form that this relationship of solidarity takes is that of a union per company.

In Argentina they were forbidden because they were a very short-term relationship of solidarity, and at some point, especially under military dictatorships (and this comes if I remember correctly from the Onganía[131] dictatorship), the possibility of unions by company was established. And this is very bad for the capital of Argentina because the most combative unions are now the unions by company, the ones that had more strength due to the conditions of capital accumulation in Argentina. This is the history of SITRAC-SITRAM, active

[131] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_Carlos_Ongan%C3%ADa.

subjects of the Cordobazo[132]. Then it continued with that, and with this type of union it reveals the weakness of a relationship of absolutely limited solidarity.

Who are the workers who compete most closely with each other? The workers who sell their labor power to the capitals of the same branch, because their labor power is relatively similar. So one can look at a next level in the relationship of solidarity, which is one union per branch. Since competition transcends the sale of labor power in the capitalists of a branch, one can find (and I am going to introduce here a national cut because that is the concrete form it has) a union association that includes the sellers of labor power in a national space. The union relationship is a conscious and voluntary relationship in which one does not enter as a person but as a personification. The expression that this relationship of solidarity has as its content the competition to sell one's labor power can be seen in a series of concrete manifestations. I always say that it is not necessary to study them in depth: it is enough to go to the soccer field and hear the expressions of xenophobia, which is a relationship of solidarity, because all of us who belong to this side of the border are in solidarity with each other to compete with those who are on the other side. So, what one sees is that this relationship of solidarity does not extend beyond that national space.

Other expressions of how competition manifests itself is the fragmentation into unions that represent the same type of worker that compete with each other for who is the one who has the representation. I always give the example of the professors of the UBA[133] and the national universities that we have 3 base unions in each of the universities and faculties, with strongly antagonistic relationships. The associations that are more friendly to the house accept anything, and those that have a stronger position to defend the conditions of sale of teachers' labor power suffer the consequences: when the employment contract has to be signed, they are not allowed to participate in the signing because we are on strike. then the buyer of labor power denies us the ability to participate in the negotiation.

From the pole of the buyers of labor power, the competition to buy labor power also takes the form of a relationship of solidarity. And they are the associations of capitalists, which also have a national scope by branch, and also always contain competition. If we look at each of these two relations of solidarity that are born of the antagonism between the buyer and seller of labor power, but which in turn is the concrete form that antagonism has within each pole, the first thing we have is that in that relationship of solidarity at one pole or at the other, in which one must enter consciously and voluntarily (because it is a direct relationship), one enters not as a person but as a personification. It is not a personal attribute to be in the relationship of solidarity of the workers or the capitalists.

I put it in broad terms: if a capitalist melts down and loses his capital and the only commodity he has left to sell is his labor power, and therefore he has passed to this side, he cannot maintain his old relationship of solidarity with the capitalists. Because then he is going to give up as much labor force as possible in exchange for being paid as little as possible and he is going to end up dying. Now he has to

[132] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cordobazo.
[133] University of Buenos Aires.

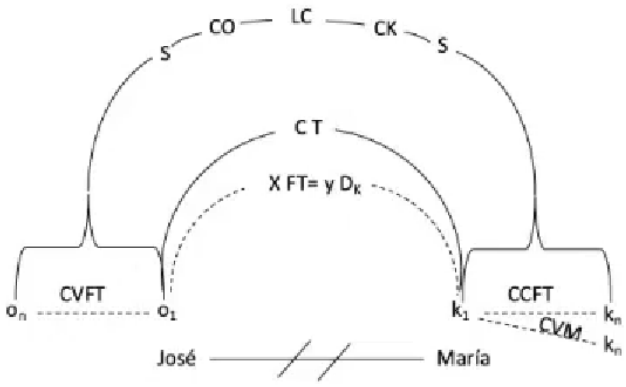
establish the relationship of solidarity with the other sellers of labor power. And conversely, in a fantasy – which has been strongly cultivated for many years, and which in some places of the Argentine public university is fiercely cultivated – is the image that if a worker is ingenious, creative (in the field that Iván raised this is strongly present, the development of computer systems and so on), he has initiative and so on, he can become a capitalist. And if it becomes a capitalist, it has to abandon its old relationship of solidarity with the workers and has to establish its new relationship of solidarity with the other capitalists. If he believes that he is still a worker, then he is going to pay his workers as much as possible, he is going to demand that they work as little as possible, and the result is that he will end up merging himself as a capitalist and he will go back to the place of his old social relationship or whatever will happen to him, but he cannot operate as a capitalist.

And here there is a contrast between this relationship between personifications and the old bonds of personal dependence, where the individual is lord by the grace of God and servant by the misfortune of God, and as long as they are in the environment where those social relations operate, they cannot change that condition because this is seen in that society as a natural attribute that there is no way to lose. so natural that the fantasy appears that the lords have blue blood and the vassals have red blood. And I always had this image in the confrontation between Moorish and Christian societies in Spain, in general in the Iberian Peninsula, it appears in literature that the Christian lord who fell prisoner of the Moorish lord did not become a slave: he was in his court until a ransom was paid, the personal attribute was not lost. Christians seem to have been less given to this type of treatment, but this figure appears in literature.

The contrast is that here one is *classified* on one side or the other. Because he is classified in his condition of personification. The classification consists of: here is this attribute and I put it in this box, this other attribute goes to this box. And in this sense it is a relation between personifications in which one is classified at one pole or the other, and insofar as this relation of solidarity tends to be universal, it is what Marx is going to call the "universal worker", the "universal capitalist": the working class and the capitalist class. That are directly linked to each other in their condition as the universe of one personification and the universe of another in the form of class struggle.

I had mentioned to you when we were looking at Chapter III some contrast between *Capital* and the *Manifesto*, where it appears that the history up to this point is the history of the class struggle [*Manifesto*], and when it speaks of the class struggle in ancient society it says: it is the struggle between the free debtors and the creditors, which ends with the defeat of debtors turned into slaves [*Capital*]. I see the contrast (Marx uses both terms and I am not going to say that he really meant this), I subject it to criticism, and I say: here there is a difference between the bonds of personal dependence and the history of the development of the modes of production carried in the transformation of the bonds of personal dependence or through the bonds of personal dependence. and this peculiar bond that as a general social relationship is unique so far in the history of humanity where one is effectively classified on one side or the other. And that is why I use the term "classes" and "class struggle" as a social relation between mutually free

individuals and therefore commodity owners, and the general form of commodity owners is the capitalist mode of production.



So, what do we have so far? The class struggle, which is a social relation, is a necessary form that the movement of capital takes. I make the clarification: there is no movement of capital that does not take the form of the class struggle, nor is there any movement in the class struggle that does not have capital as its content. Proposals that assume a movement of capital without class struggle are abstracting a necessary concrete form of capital, and proposals that speak of class struggle as something that is governed externally to the movement of capital abstract from the content of the class struggle.

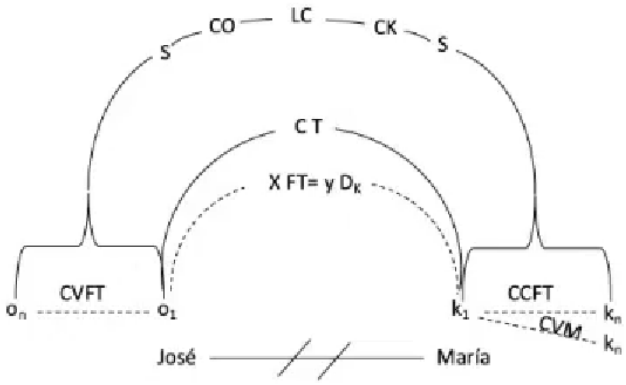
And I make one more clarification. So far this is the only determination we have seen with respect to the class struggle, but one can transfer it to Marx's deployment of the working day: this is the way in which the working day is fixed at the point that corresponds to the purchase and sale of labor power for its value. How is the purchase and sale of labor power imposed? He says: they have to force us so that we cannot continue working, because if they do not force us we will continue. This movement appears on the side of the capitalists to extend the working day, on the side of the workers to sell labor power for its value. The antagonistic relationship between them does not allow them to do this, the antagonistic relationship between capitalist and worker has the form of the antagonistic relationship between universal worker and universal capitalist, and that is the class struggle. It is a civil war that is sometimes more covert, which is not noticed, and other times more open.

Iván: How can we understand those social confrontations in which what one sees is that social alliances are established between personifications of capital and personifications of the working class[134]? These are more concrete forms, but for example when there were some general strikes in the Macri era, it appeared that the CGT had as its slogan the defense of SMEs; and this Saturday there is a very large mobilization in the Plaza de Mayo called against the IMF, which is not a direct confrontation against the capitals that, if you will, exploit the national labor force. I understand it as related to the fact that these workers also participate in these

[134] Of the labor force*.

small businesses or in national life and understand that the IMF and others or the debt are going to affect their living conditions. But I also see that contradiction between national forms.

JIC: Now let's get to it. Indeed, there are much more violent forms than the one you mentioned because one has to look at wars, and wars between national spheres are forms of competition and enclose relations of solidarity within a national space that acquires a character that unites workers and capitalists of that national space against the others. Now let's go straight to that, and I don't know if we're going to have the time, but I always take as an example of this that you raise what happened with the 2nd IWA, which was a relationship of solidarity against the capitalists until another relationship of solidarity appeared in the middle and... But I don't want to get ahead of myself. [...][135].



[We return to the same scheme as before] We look at the form of the development of this contradiction and what we find is: capital needed the lungs of labor power so that the process of valorization would not be interrupted. The way in which it can satisfy that need and at the same time pay labor power for its value is the class struggle. In the class struggle the workers strike as an expression of their antagonistic relation to the position of the universal seller and the valorization of capital is interrupted. The capitalists make a lockout of the bosses as an[136] expression of their antagonistic relationship as buyers of labor power with respect to the workers and the valorization of capital is interrupted. And so what we have is that if this contradictory need for the total capital of society has developed up to this point, it still lacks the deployment of a concrete form that overcomes this contradiction that we are seeing in which valuation is interrupted, so that valorization flows. And at the same time we have a second question regarding this form.

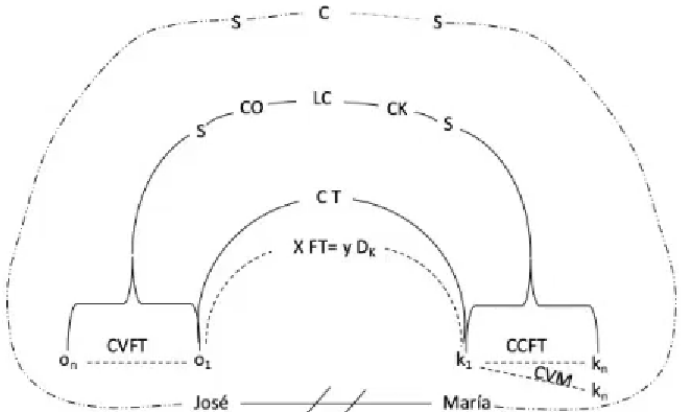
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[135] Iván's speech on the condition of independent producers who at the same time are seasonal sellers of labor power, speaks of "semi-proletariat", which requires more development to be answered... Also another one from Javiera regarding the contradiction of being able to sell labor power at its value even if there is a surplus.

[136] "The International Labour Organization (ILO) has defined lockout as 'the total or partial closure of one or more workplaces, or the obstruction of the normal activity of employees, by one or more employers with the intention of forcing or resisting lawsuits or expressing grievances, or supporting other employers in their demands or grievances'" [Source (Wiki)].

Here the universal worker has his representative: he is the working class. The universal capitalist has its representative, its expression: it is the capitalist class. They are expressed in the class struggle. But the concrete subject to which we referred earlier is neither the capitalist class nor the working class. The concrete subject that is the bearer of the unity of the process of social production and consumption is the total capital of society, which up to now has no expression of its own, has no one to personify it. The capitalist class personifies individual capital, and the working class the sellers of labor power. Therefore, this social relation has to take a concrete form in which the antagonistic character of the class struggle is erased in the form of a relation of universal solidarity between capitalists and workers, and at the same time this social relation is the bearer of the capacity to directly express the needs of the total capital of society. What form can this relationship take?

It has to be a relationship of solidarity. But if it appears as a relationship of solidarity between capitalists and workers, expressing a general interest, which is the unity of the process of social metabolism, then it can only be a relationship between personifications because there are no personal ties here. But at the same time it cannot appear as a relation between personifications, because otherwise the antagonism between personifications is immediately revealed. So, it has to be a relationship between personifications but have the appearance of a relationship between people. And then I graphed it this way:



Because this is a conscious and voluntary relationship of solidarity that appears as a relationship between people. And that relationship of solidarity is the relationship of citizenship, which appears to express a common, general interest. Like any relationship of solidarity, it contains all antagonisms. Up to this point, citizenship relations have been curtailed nationally.

The two forms of citizenship relationship that exist universally are citizenship by blood, as if that condition were transmitted by the blood of the parents, or the relationship of citizenship by the soil in which one was born, as if that soil (which is a natural condition) had the attribute of giving the individual that personal condition of citizen. But to be a citizen you have to be a free individual. And consequently, you have to be in a position to buy and sell. That is why minors do

not have the attribute of the relationship of citizenship. You have to be a citizen to participate in the electoral process, minors cannot. Even individuals who were free, but who are deprived of liberty with a firm conviction, cannot vote because they are not supposed to be able to act as free individuals. And when an individual who does not have the attribute of blood or soil is going to convert, he is going to acquire the status of citizen, this process is called *naturalization*: the individual is naturalized from such a country, it is as if he acquired the natural condition (that as a personification one does not have natural attributes, he has them as a person).

Then there are certain divorces between the condition of free individual and the condition of citizens that make the concrete forms that the national processes of capital accumulation have and the historical moments. Women throughout the history of the capitalist mode of production were not even free individuals at any time in their lives. They were under the personal power of the father when they were unmarried and of the husband when they were married. They acquire the status of free individuals first but not that of citizenship, and then the status of citizenship. And with the dissolution of the bonds of personal dependence, what was previously governed simply by bonds of personal dependence between individuals who are not mutually free, acquires the character of relations governed through the bond of citizenship. There is the imputability of minors, who are not free but are imputable, the limitation of maternal and paternal powers over children as if they were free individuals but at the same time cannot buy and sell. Concrete figures appear that make this much more complex, but I am taking it in the simplest determination.

This double condition that it appears as a natural attribute of people and at the same time one must be a free individual to be the bearer of that relationship, which has the appearance of a personal relationship but is between personifications, and through that appearance the openly antagonistic relationship (the class struggle) was erased. And now there is a common interest which is that the capital of the national space reproduces, because if it is not reproduced, there is no one to sell the labor power to. [Regarding what Ivan said:] A situation appears in which national accumulation is going to hit a barrier, the debt with the IMF, and then a relationship of solidarity appears that does not simply affect capitalists or workers, but the unity of this movement. Then, faced with a condition that strangles the process of valorization of capital within that space, workers and capitalists, not as such, but as citizens, come out "in defense" of the unity of this process of reproduction of capital.

So far we look at one aspect of that relationship. Now: one is not simply a citizen. One is a citizen of the state. The state is a social relation that has an objectified existence in the structure of the state, which has those who personify the movement of that objectified social relation and which immediately represents the needs of the total capital of society within that national space. He is not the representative of the capitalist class or the working class. I'm going to take the length of the working day.

The working class demands a limited working day, and that is where Marx makes reference to the state. He says: *it takes him away* from the state, and sets a

certain working day. With which it springs from the class struggle, it takes the form of a provision of the state that obliges (has a general social validity) the two who are related in this employment contract, that this contract cannot be established for more than a number of hours/day. The workers go on strike again because they are fighting for a shorter working day and the total capital of society does not need a shorter working day, so the state takes out its armed wing and breaks the heads of the workers who are on strike.

So the appearance when one doesn't look at the unity of the relationship is that... I am going to synthesize it between two types of affirmation that seem absolutely opposed and that are two sides of the same abstraction. There is the proposal that says, and that we now hear in superabundance: if the state did not exist, society would be prosperous because capital would be in the fullness of its movement. And the other opposing version that makes the same abstraction of exteriority is: if the state had not intervened, capitalism would have ended a long time ago. But the state does not intervene: it acts, in order to "intervene" one must be outside, and the state is not outside the movement of capital, it is the representative of the total capital of society. And if in what we have so far, each individual capitalist is the exploiter of his individual workers, the state as the representative of the total capital of society is the exploiter of the working class *under normal conditions*. When the image of a "welfare state" appears, for the working class the only thing that exists in the capitalist mode of production is exploitation. It is a form of exploitation of the working class by historical circumstances that have not yet fit.

When we look at the state and the commodity, what we find is that the commodity is a social relation which has an objectified existence which seems to spring from the free consciousness and will of individuals, and yet which confronts and dominates that apparently free consciousness and will: free consciousness is the form of alienated consciousness. When we look at the state, what we have is a social relation, a way of organizing the life of society, which has an objectified existence that seems to spring from the free consciousness and will of individuals and that confronts individuals with the power to dominate them. And it has a general social validity: it is mandatory to comply with the rule. The state (with all the concrete determinations that mediate therein) reproduces the form of this general relation in the simplest form. All national constitutions have the form of a contract where individuals come free by nature to freely manifest that they are going to establish a social bond that has an objectified existence. All this is the concrete determination of free consciousness because it is alienated.

That is the marathon development that I was trying to do. What follows I could only enunciate. But if it is possible, and because of what Ivan had proposed, the manifestations of national solidarity relations... I said: I take the Second International, and its axis is the national fragments of the European working classes, where the forms of the capitalist mode of production were most fully developed. And they have an axis in the history of those working classes, which were the permanent military confrontations: France with Germany, England and Spain, Russia with Germany and with England... In the immediate vicinity are the Franco-Prussian War and the Crimean War, contemporaneous with the creation of this association.

I always put it very schematically and simplified, almost as a little story: the French workers and the German workers who come from that history say: we are exploited both in Germany and in France, if the capitalists want another war, let the capitalists go, we are indifferent because we have a relationship of solidarity. From both sides of the border they say this. But what is happening is that the development of capital accumulation in Europe in particular is showing that these national spaces have more and more problems in sustaining their reproduction on themselves and that they need to compete in the world market, that they cannot simply produce for their internal markets and that they are going to clash in that competition. and that the most powerful form of competition is war: in competition one tries to materially destroy the capital of the other, destroying the means of production, making it impossible for the PSOC to function. There are more determinations: on both sides, capital is freed from labor power that is in excess of it. But that comes for Volume 3.

What is beginning to happen within the International? That the French workers are beginning to see: if the German state wins the war and defeats the French capitalists, we will have no one to sell our labor power to. And the German workers look at the same thing the other way around. And each one says: if the capitalists of my national space win, I will have someone to sell my labor power to. And the more it becomes clear that competition is going to take the form of a military confrontation, more and more within the 2nd International it begins to fragment. Because the relationship of solidarity that exploits us on both sides of the border begins to be the relationship of solidarity on each side of the border: the French working class with a French fragment of the capitalist class, and the same on the other side. And the 2nd International arrives... I raise one thing before.

For me there is a very clear expression of this situation which is a text written by Otto Bauer, who was the head of German Social Democracy, one of the pillars of the 2nd International, where he says: in the *Communist Manifesto*, the end was "workers of all countries unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains, and a world to win", but this was 50 years ago, things changed: now the German workers have to lose. And with this he justifies that then the representatives of the German working class (and the same of the French) in the parliaments vote on the war credits so that the national state of each one is armed, and it is obvious that they are going to war. And there the 2nd International was dissolved. Within it there are positions that oppose this, but this is what ends up being imposed.

And I close this with a specific national experience that has repercussions with some outside the national space because we should as citizens have a strongly antagonistic relationship. If I remember correctly, it is March 30, 1982. The CGT makes the first demonstration of demand for working conditions in a mobilization against the dictatorship. On April 2, the Malvinas Islands were recovered and war with England was made. On that day there is a massive demonstration in the Plaza de Mayo supporting the action of the military dictatorship. And many organizations and individuals who were in the first march were also in the second.

What is it that appears? The antagonistic relationship, the first march of the working class recognizing itself as a class and confronting the representative of the total capital of society, the next a relationship of citizen solidarity that supported the national state, where the representatives of the total capital of the national society and those of the working class were present. It took just two days for a relationship of solidarity within the working class to turn into one of solidarity that implied substantial support for the military dictatorship, and the mass of those who disappeared during the dictatorship were rank-and-file union delegates. I made this reference before, Javiera. It had already come before because during the same dictatorship there was a war between the Argentine and Chilean states over the border, and from that point on, as the Chilean state allowed English planes or ships to circulate and supported them, the antagonistic relationship of xenophobia on the Argentine side towards Chile became deeply sharpened. And 40 years later there is still a clear memory of "what Chileans did to us instead of being in solidarity." This is it. […] The relation of class solidarity is not the most developed concrete form of the general social relation in the capitalist mode of production. As a historical relationship it will be something else, but as for the immediate reproduction of capital what we have is this.

Think of it in terms of the relationship between the economic base and the legal and political superstructure, which appeared in chapter II, and which for me is the deployment with what we have so far. And we have not yet seen that the capitalist mode of production contains any need to transcend itself, in fact, what we are seeing is the way in which it reproduces itself: that the class struggle is a form of its reproduction.

To nurture some hope, when we begin to look at the production of relative surplus value, which is what comes next, we will see that the capitalist mode of production needs to revolutionize itself. And that then it has a historical movement that is not simply the reproduction of itself *identical to itself*, but that has the need to transform itself, and we have to ask ourselves how far this need to transform itself goes and who is the historical subject that carries that need, which has not been deployed so far. I don't know if they want to raise something else or if we don't communicate at the end of March/beginning of April. [...].

[Revision][137]

We will review what we saw last time, the flow of development. I think it is important to start with the starting point, which was to confront our condition as political subjects and ask ourselves about the determinations of that subjectivity, and that quick analysis that we made in the first meeting until we asked ourselves about the need for our own action and arrived at the commodity.

[§1. COMMODITY AND MONEY

Chapter I. The Commodity]

From there, I return very quickly to what we found in the analysis of the commodity: here there are use values that have as an attribute an "unnatural" capacity, which is to put themselves in a relationship of equality with each other in exchange. If they are put in such a relationship, it is because there must be a common attribute in both that is present in the same quantity. We asked ourselves about this attribute and took the approach that I followed rather than the strict structure of Marx's exposition. We said: we have to ask ourselves about the action that put that attribute. This action cannot be separated from the action of setting the use value because only useful objects are changed. So we look for this action that has a double character: the capacity to produce objects that as use values are different, but that, what we had there above all as exchange value, serve to be exchanged, they are the same. Then we began to wonder about the attribute, we left the exchange relation and we began to see that this attribute is not natural, it is not placed by natural actions, so we are left with human work as a "natural" action, but that from the point of view of human subjectivity appears to operate on the rest of nature.

We looked at labor and said: it is a productive expenditure of the human body, no matter in what form that expenditure is made—abstract labor—but at the same time we said that abstract labor cannot be done without giving it a definite concrete useful form, and therefore we could look at the unity of what work is. which is to productively spend the body under a specific useful form, and to separate it analytically. And we found that the productive expenditure of the body, a material condition common to all forms of social life, plays a peculiar role in the capitalist mode of production because it puts a common qualitative attribute in commodities: they are all abstract labour expenditures that can be placed in the same quantity.

That was the first step in this analysis. Then we said: in abstract labor there are qualitative differences: productivity, intensity, and later on there appeared (and ended up being reflected as a qualitative difference) the non-normal, extraordinary complexity. Only through work done under normal conditions do these qualitative differences appear erased, there are greater or lesser deviations from that

[137] In this session and in the following one, everything seen so far is synthesized, almost 4 months later (chapters I-IX).

normality but the common quality appears linked to this normality, whose simplest expression is the average (there are more complex ones).

We saw that abstract labor was socially necessary, but that in this condition of being socially necessary it also had a second characteristic: it is useful for others, to satisfy the human needs of individuals other than the producer. We had advanced, there were no longer qualitative differences, and we found that since abstract labor is socially necessary, not all human work has the capacity to produce changeable objects. So we asked ourselves about a specificity within the general condition of abstract labor, we looked at the materiality of that abstract commodity-producing labor and what we found was its way of organizing itself: the producer of those commodities performs his socially necessary abstract labor having full control of his individual labor. He is a private and independent worker, he works for others regardless of those who are going to consume the product of his work. At this point we had that commodities are exchangeable objects because they are products of equal quantities of abstract socially necessary labor materialized in them in a private and independent way. With which we answer why this attribute of changeability exists in commodities and it is what we call value.

The question that followed was: why, when socially necessary abstract labor is performed privately and independently, is its product represented as value? And here the analysis of the commodity could not answer us, because if we look at an isolated commodity we cannot realize that it has the attribute, it only manifests it when it enters into the exchange. So we had to return to the expression of value as exchange value. It is a relationship of equality, but we had 2 poles that fulfill different functions. We had the relative pole (I'm going to take my gnocchi so as not to leave it aside), if we had 10G = 1S, what we saw is that the 10G enter into that exchange relation to express its own value, which is never expressed in quantities of labor but in the body of another commodity that functions as an equivalent to the one that is going to express its value relatively in it.

We continued to look at the form that the exchange relation takes and we found that the commodity that is at the relative pole and enters to express its value, has to prove that it is the product of socially necessary abstract labor equal to that which has been materialized in the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent. And yet, when we look at it, what we see is concrete labor: work that produces shoes. And that only because it produces shoes is its product able to express the value of the $10G$. And we said: value is social labor that has to be manifested in the exchange relation, and what we saw is that the commodity that is at the relative pole has to prove its value by entering the exchange relation, and it does so by equating itself with a commodity that in that relation only reveals that it is the product of private labor.

So we had that the social labor materialized in the commodity of the relative pole is expressed through the private labor of the commodity that is at the pole of the equivalent. The commodity at the pole of the equivalent does not have to prove anything: it already enters into this relation as an expression of the SNALdPaI, it enters as an expression of value, while the one at the relative pole (which can only

enter into the relation of exchange because it also has value) has to enter into this relation in order to prove that it actually has value. As long as it does not enter into the exchange relationship, it cannot prove it. If something that was intended to be a commodity has been produced by labor that is not socially necessary, cannot enter into the exchange relation, it will become clear that it is not or never was a commodity.

Then we looked at the development of the form of value, and we were confronted with the problem of why, if value is quantities of labour, it is not expressed as quantities of labour, of its substance. To which was added the question of why the work performed privately and independently, its product, takes the form of commodities and the materialized labor is represented as value. And the fact that its substance is quantities of labour, its form is in quantities of the body of another commodity, confronted us with the problem of the expression of the magnitude of value, which depended not only on what happened to the movement of the value of the commodity which is at the relative pole, but also to the value of the commodity at the pole of the equivalent.

If, in this mediation, the productivity of labour changed from that which was at the relative pole, changed its value, and did not change the productivity of that which was at the equivalent pole, this change in the value of that of the relative pole was unequivocally expressed in the expression of value. It could happen that the productivity of the labour produced by that of the relative pole did not change, but that of the Pe did, and then the expression of the value of the commodity at the relative pole in quantities of the body of the one at the equivalent pole changed, even if its value did not change. And if the productivity of labor that produced the two occurred in parallel, the value of the two changed but the expression of value did not change. There can be a whole series of combinations. Even that the decrease in value of a commodity, if that of the equivalent pole decreased more than proportionally, appeared as an increase in the expression of value. And this brings us to the problem of how motion is identified, and it is not possible to recognize it in immediacy unless one can look at what happened to the productivity of the labor that each commodity produces.

Then we displayed that expression of value. First we looked at the unfolded relative expression in which a commodity expressed its value in quantities of the body of all the other commodities in society. And there we also began to see not simply that the abstract labor materialized in the $10G$ had a social character because it was capable of being equated with the abstract labor materialized in 1S, now the very expression of value, the exchange value itself shows us that here there is a common attribute between the labor that produces the gnocchi and that which produces all the other commodities.

We turned the relation upside down, and from having a series of special equivalents, we now have the possibility of a single expression, the universe of commodities expressing their value in a single general equivalent, which can never express the magnitude of its own value. We were looking at the development of exchange relations, and what emerged to us is that the full expression of value is not simply this general equivalent, but that in the development of exchange, this

general equivalent comes to be socially recognized as fulfilling the function of expressing the value of all other commodities, and then we are faced with its development as money.

Now we found ourselves – and this is something that has to do with the method – the contrast with what is a logical representation. We begin by saying: no commodity, being separated from the exchange relation, can show that it is value. And now we find ourselves with the development of the form of value, that there is necessarily a commodity that expresses value even if it is not in an exchange relationship. What it cannot do is express the magnitude of that value, but I look at money and know that it is immediately exchangeable for any commodity.

So, we came to the question of: this is the general social relation, the way in which society establishes the unity between social production and consumption. At the beginning of each cycle of the process of social life, unity must be established between the individual character of labor and its social character, and the same with individual and social consumption. What concrete form the establishment of that unit takes is, from the point of view of the unit itself, to assign to each member of society what useful work he is going to do for the others, and therefore what concrete use-value is going to be assigned to them for his individual and productive consumption. From the point of view of each of the individual organs of this process of social metabolism, the question is how each of these organs is recognized as the individual organ of this unit in production and in the process of consumption. And this is what we saw as consciousness, the way in which each individual carries in his person the capacity to know himself as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism. So, we wondered about the consciousness and the will of the commodity producer, and we found that he confronts the product of his labor as something that has a peculiar attribute.

I make the contrast with the way in which Marx is posing it, who asks himself where the "mysterious" character of the commodity springs from, and what he is doing in that analysis is what we had seen before, there is insinuated what I put with the double schema. He says that the materiality of labour as abstract labour did not enter into the production of concrete use-values, because they are common to all forms of society, and what is peculiar is the way in which each member of society is assigned what concrete useful labour he is going to do and what he is going to consume. When one looks at the capitalist mode of production, in short, to put it in this simpler form that we have up to now, it is... At the moment when the cycle has to begin between the individuals of society, the only link that exists is that in the person of each of them there is an individual quota of the labor power of society. But this individual quota is of labor power in general: it is not assigned under a specific useful form. It is the consciousness and will of these producers that will define what concrete form they will give to the expenditure of their individual quota of labor power.

Production is carried out without immediate unity with social consumption and now indirectly unity must be established. And just as there is no personal bond between these mutually free individuals, who therefore have full control over their individual labor, which implies private ownership over their own means of

production, they cannot be directly linked to each other through their condition as persons: they can only be linked indirectly, through this social attribute that their commodities have as the product of socially necessary abstract labor materialized in their own way. In a private and independent way in a commodity, it is capable of entering into an exchange relation with another commodity that is the product of the same quantity of SNALdPaI. Value is the bearer of the indirect unity of social production and consumption. Producers recognize each other as having produced something useful for others through this autonomous mechanism that is established in the exchange movement of commodities, where commodities enter into that relation because they have the attribute of being values.

Marx then says: the mysterious character is that human beings see that what is an attribute of their persons confronts them as if it were a natural attribute of things, and that is why they behave towards them as if they were fetishes that have by nature the power to change themselves, to say what is socially useful work. who did or did not act as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism. And then they see it as a social power that is alien and dominates them. I have argued that there is a relationship between individuals who have a free conscience because they can establish the relationship of unity in their process of social metabolism, they can recognize themselves in their condition as individual organs in an indirect way, as a power that the commodity has. Consequently, the free consciousness of these commodity producers is the form of their alienated consciousness.

[Chapter II. The Exchange Process]

In Chapter II what appears is that we now have to see the exchange movement of commodities. And the first thing that appears in this movement are the owners of the commodities. It seems that at first glance they have the power to dominate commodities, but it is immediately clear that they have to act as personifications of commodities, consciences and wills put at the service, first of producing value, and now of manifesting value in the exchange relation. What Marx is going to propose is that this indirect relationship between things has to take shape, be realized, through a direct conscious and voluntary link between their possessors, between people in their condition of personifications. This is where the expression of the superstructure of legal relations appears.

The next question that arises is: how can free individuals, independent of each other, who see themselves as equals because they exchange equivalents, give one of them the power to have the attribute of producing a commodity that is immediately exchangeable for any other? We need to go back to the historical development of the commodity when it is not yet the product of individuals who see themselves as equals. Then comes this schematic development of the commodity, which begins to be an object that can be exchanged by the will of the changeling, who are not free or isolated individuals, but communities, how the power of the commodity in this change dissolves the bonds of personal dependence, which first appear between communities and then enter into each community. and how more and more the unity of social production and consumption is established through commodity production, and consequently how

more and more commodities are exchanged as materializations of equal quantities of socially necessary abstract labor, and the consciousness and will of their producers are more and more determined as personifications of their commodities.

In this process, a commodity appears that, when the commodity does not yet have this full determination, is used as a mediator in exchanges. And as the commodity is transformed from an object exchangeable by the will of the changers to an exchangeable object by the materialization of the substance of value which determines the will of the changeable, this commodity which acts as an intermediary changes from its function of facilitating exchange to being the general representative of value in money. And there is the development of why gold is going to fulfill a purely social function as an expression of the world of commodities, and yet what matters is the materiality of the body of that M: it has to be able to fragment and reunite without losing its use value, not deteriorate its use value so that it does not lose its use value. and enclosing relatively large magnitudes of labor in relatively small quantities of use value. And a historical development of how [this function] is going to fall on gold is going to appear. Marx is going to make a still intermediate development and in Volume 3 the problems of having two commodities that are capable of representing the world of commodities will appear, but that will converge towards gold.

[Chapter III. Money, or the circulation of commodities]

In chapter III, the exercise of the movement of exchange will appear, but before it can be set in motion we must look at the functions that money fulfills. We already know that it is a measure of value because it itself has value. But the function of standard/measure of prices appears[138], where what is compared are different quantities of gold with each other, which contains different quanta of socially necessary abstract labor materialized in them. And a monetary name is given to those amounts. And here appears for the first time a determination that is external to the movement of commodities itself: that it is the state that has the power to establish the monetary name and the function of standard of prices of money.

With these conditions we look at the exchange movement and we find that it starts with a sale followed by a purchase, but when one looks at the sale, it is also a purchase in itself. And we must analyze the two phases of this movement. In the sale [C-M] the possessor of commodities appears (it is not known whether he produced it himself or came into his hands in some other way), he takes it to exchange because for him it is not a use-value, and the problem he has is that of the somersault of the commodity: that he has to prove whether it has value by entering into the exchange relation with money. The one who crashes in this leap is the possessor because he is left without social relations, he cannot participate in social consumption if he cannot sell, if he has not brought to exchange a use value that carries value. From the buyer's pole [M-C], you don't have to check anything because your commodities represent value. The question is whether what is in front of it is a use-value for itself. If it is, it will take the commodity out of the

[138] **JIC** [later, but here is the clarification]: I forgot to say that price is the expression of exchange value in money, therefore expression of value in money, which is very relevant to Volume 3.

sphere of circulation and into the sphere of consumption, which can be productive or individual.

So we have this cyclical movement of commodity metamorphosis. If we deploy it, we will find the indirect unity between social production and consumption, and that only what is a commodity enters there, outside what is the product of work that may be done privately but is not socially necessary. Here there was a whole movement of double manifestation of the commodity that has to prove that it is use value, but what its owner seeks is that it be converted into money. And at the other pole is the one who cares about use-value, who brings the expression of value to exchange. This is the unity of the process of change. Marx goes on to propose that in this unity what can happen is that, as they are two movements separated by money, the first metamorphosis takes place but not the second, or the first is separated from the second. Consequently, the *possibility of a crisis* arises, that this unity cannot be established. But only the possibility.

In movement, commodities move in and out of exchange, and money stays inside exchange, acts as a medium of circulation, and then the appearance arises that it is the movement of money that moves commodities. And what Marx is going to emphasize is that this is not the case, that it is the movement of commodities that is reflected in the movement of money. When we look at the functions of money as a medium of circulation, it appears that, in spite of the material attributes of gold, it may wear out in circulation, and the monetary name of money may be separated from the substance of value which it contains. Marx states that in circulation it is irrelevant unless it absolutely or substantially loses that magnitude of substance of value, because the one who receives money as a medium of circulation, the only condition he sets for receiving it is that he be accepted as a representative of a quantity of value that is in the name but not in the body of that money. This is leading to the possibility of the replacement of gold by signs of value.

What is going to appear there is the contrast between the laws of the circulation of gold as money and those of the circulation of signs of value. Of gold, a certain amount enters because it has its own value. Signs of value, enter all those that are put into circulation because they have no value in themselves. But if more signs of value are put into circulation than nominally equivalent to the gold that enters circulation, each of these signs of value will lose a proportionate part of its ability to represent value and will be reflected in an increase in the prices of commodities measured in the signs. Consequently, the sign of value, in order to operate, must have forced course, and it is put on it by the state.

Looking at this function of money as a means of circulation, a new function of money emerges from this movement, which is as a means of hoarding, as a treasure, where the first metamorphosis of the commodity into money is found, but money leaves circulation and becomes treasure. And here the figure of personification changes: the hoarder has a specific difference with respect to the simple possessor of commodities. You have no limit to the usage values you need because what you need is value. So, the treasure can always go beyond what it reached at any given moment. I leave out some aspects of Marx about the aesthetic

form of the treasure and so on. What appears is a function of hoarding, which is to be the reserve of gold, for when the circulation requires more money, then the gold is melted and minted, and at times when there is gold left over, it is removed from circulation and becomes treasure. So the treasury operates as a lung that regulates the amount of gold. What governs is the amount of gold that is needed in the circulation, but since it is an indirect regulation, it needs this lung to be able to flow.

The next function of money is as a means of payment. Here is another change in personification: the seller became a creditor and the buyer became a debtor, a relationship that extends over time. The movement has reversed because now there is a buy that is followed by a sell. It was bought without having sold: now you have to sell to get to the money. The purpose is not to dispose of use-value, but to dispose of the general social relation placed in motion, in circulation. Here there is going to be something linked to what we had to start looking at today. Marx refers to the fact that in classical antiquity (Greece and Rome) the class struggle is the struggle between creditors and debtors and ends with the transformation of debtors into slaves; in contrast to what appears in the *Manifesto*, that the history we know so far is the history of the class struggle, and here slaves and masters appear, etc. So, there is a contrast between a reference to a specificity to the class struggle with respect to the capitalist mode of production, against a general development.

I skipped a part that I have to go back to. Marx looks at the money used in the nation states, and on the other hand the world money: here money loses all national uniform, it no longer has a monetary name, it is a quantity of gold in the form of an ingot... And so it works like money on the world market. I was arguing that in our experience world money is not in the form of gold and there are "national uniforms" everywhere functioning as world money (but they are certain national uniforms). That the national treasuries are not in gold, but in debt securities, which are born from the function of money as a means of payment, because it is a promise of payment. And so all this required in order to develop the movement of money as world money, to have deployed a series of determinations that are far from being in front of us, and that is why we only marked this contrast and we have to look at it much further (something appears in Volume 3, but the complexity of those determinations goes much further because we have to explain the specificities, national differences).

In the exchange movement, indirect unity can imply not simply that there is something that wanted to be a commodity but that was not a social use value but was left out, but that there are things that are commodities that maintain their use value, but have been produced in excess or in excess of what is normal. the normal unit. Then they enter into the exchange relation and the solvent social need (that which is capable of being represented by money, the only [social need] that counts in the capitalist mode of production) has to be enlarged if there are surplus commodities with respect to normality, or reduced if it has been produced in the absence of normality. Consequently, a commodity that is the product of a certain amount of socially necessary abstract labor will appear in the exchange relation as if it were capable of being exchanged for other commodities that contain more

value or less value than itself. The surplus commodities are going to be exchanged at a price that is below their value, and others are going to be sold above the value.

Marx is going to use that expression that the substance or magnitude of value will have been "added" (if it is sold above value)... And magnitude is the quantitative aspect of substance, which is why this expression has given rise to a series of proposals that are very valid today, which consider that what is specific to the capitalist mode of production is not the private character of work, but the abstract character, turning that material condition into the physiological character of abstract labor that Marx makes explicit markedly (and that when one looks at the unity of social metabolism one sees that it is a material problem of assigning capacity to work), say that Marx said that supply and demand determine the value of commodities. What happens is that someone who has materialized a certain magnitude of value in his commodity will receive in return the product of a larger amount of abstract socially necessary labor than the one he put in, or a smaller amount. But from the point of view of the unity of the process of social metabolism, all the product of socially necessary abstract labour is going to enter into social consumption. In circulation there is a movement of value from one commodity holder to another.

We paused to emphasize in this the antagonistic character of the relations between commodity owners, which immediately appears between buyer and seller, and since we are all buyers and sellers of commodities, there is a general antagonistic relationship not between persons, but in the condition of personifications. What interests one is the opposite of what interests another, between buyer and seller, between sellers who compete with other sellers, and buyers who compete with each other. Therefore, the legal relations that we saw between personifications are all antagonistic. But through this relationship between personifications—the contract—what appeared up to this point is the competition between those who are at each pole, that form in which unity is established, that form that the material unity of the process of social metabolism takes. We have this indirect relationship that determines the consciousness and will of people as personifications of commodity, which enters into this direct conscious and voluntary relationship of an antagonistic character.

[§2ª. THE TRANSFORMATION OF MONEY INTO CAPITAL

Chapter IV. Transformation of money into capital]

When we looked at the exchange of commodities at the start, we said: only commodities that are equivalent can be exchanged. When we look at the general unit, from being able to answer why commodities are exchangeable objects *in their normality*, what we find is that since this normality has the form of a permanent fluctuation around it, commodities can be exchanged even though they are not strictly equivalent. And again, if we were in the process of developing a logical

representation, this would be inadmissible: we would have to say that the simple model has been falsified by the concrete model. This is the problem that appears in the proposals of supply and demand as determining the value of commodities: it is intended to explain the changeability of commodities by the fact that they are exchanged, by the concrete way in which they are exchanged; or states that value is common to all forms of society but the commodity value has in specific that it is changed. Then value, the attribute of changeability, is explained by change.

If we came from a movement in which money arrived as a result of the cycle, which leads us to say that the purpose of this process of social production is no longer the production of use values mediated by the production of value, because hoarding tells us that the purpose is the production of the social relation, and now we see that it is the social relationship but to put it in the place where it is exercised, we found ourselves with the movement of money as capital. And in this movement of money as capital, the cycle of metamorphosis was changed, it started with money, mediated the commodity and returned to the form of money [M-C-M]. We'll see that when it starts in Volume 2 it's going to unfold this. The other thing we saw was the work on circulation, but we will look at it later.

Unlike the movement of commodities where money intervened as a medium of circulation, and the purpose of movement was outside the movement, since here the movement ends where it begins, the purpose of the movement is in the movement itself. What sense does it make to start from the general representative of social wealth in order to transform it into particular commodities that must be reconfirmed as materializations of abstract socially necessary, socially useful labor, done privately, in order to return to the same quality that had been torn away? The only thing that makes sense of this is a quantitative difference: that there is more money at the end than at the start.

When we looked at who is the subject of this movement of money as capital, it appeared that in this cycle no personal need of the capitalist is satisfied: on the contrary, this satisfaction takes money out of its movement as capital. And we found that the same objectified social relation acted as a subject, transformed its material form in order to reproduce itself enlarged, and restarted this movement *as if* it were a living subject. And here, what appears—I don't think I planted it last year—is something else that appears in the form of the opposite that we had initially found, and that we can only discover from that appearance of being the opposite. When we look at the function of money as a medium of circulation, it appeared that the content of the movement is given by the movement of commodities, money reflects that movement passively and seems to be the one that makes commodities move. And now what we find is that money as capital is the subject of movement, it is what makes commodities move.

If we begin by saying that in the capitalist mode of production, at the moment when social labour has to be set in motion, there is no social relation between individuals – the only thing that exists is that in their person there is a quota of labour power in society – what we now find is that this is not so: There is a social relation that sets in motion social labor and consumption, and that acts as a subject that produces itself. And again: it is only because we have first discovered that it

was not money that made commodities move, that this was an appearance, that we can now discover that under the concrete form of capital it is money that makes the movement in general, and that consequently the immediate purpose of this movement is the production of more value. of surplus value, not of use value.

The question is: how is it possible that more value arises in an exchange of equivalents? It is impossible. Consequently, in this transformation of money into a commodity, money must have become a commodity capable of producing more value than it already costs. What produces value? Work. Therefore money must have become the source of value, of labour, which is the labour power of the workers who sell labour power. The first condition for the existence of labor power as a commodity is that its seller be the private owner of his own labor power, and therefore a personally free individual. Why does that personally free individual sell his labor power? Because it is separated from its means of production. That separation cannot be a product of nature, but of social history. But here what matters in order to answer it is not where it came from, but the fact that it exists as a seller of its own labor power. We then have the doubly free worker.

The question that follows is how the value of their labor power is determined. Like that of any other commodity: the amount of socially necessary abstract labor that materialized privately and independently in producing that commodity. We stopped to look at this and said that the work that the worker does to reproduce his own person is not part of the value of labor power because it is not social labor, it is simply individual, organized immediately by the individual who is going to perform it. The work that other members of the working family do so that the members of the family who sell labor power have labor power is social labor, but it is not done privately and independently, it is organized on the basis of bonds of personal dependence. It is materialized in the labor force of the sellers, but it is not part of their value. What forms the value of their labour power is the SNALdPaI materialised in the commodities that the workers need to consume in order to have labour power. But since this labour-power is also produced in the working-class family, and the members of the working-class family who have to work within it in order to produce the labour-power of the sellers also need to consume commodities, the value of these commodities is part of the value of the labour-power of the labour-selling members of labour-power. And since it is the family that produces the renewal of labor power, the commodities that the children of the working family have to consume in order to have labor power to sell in the future, are also part of the value of the labor power of the generation that is in charge of the production of that future labor power.

Then we have the determination of the value of this commodity, and we can go and look at what is going to happen. But since Marx has been looking at this in the process of circulation, he makes this key observation in the whole development and that has to do with aspects of the method, how the buying and selling of labor power in circulation is presented as the kingdom of freedom (because the worker and the capitalist are free individuals), of equality (because they exchange equivalents), of equality (because they exchange equivalents), of private property (I always add: based on one's own work —apparently—), and of personal interest

[Bentham]. And Marx says: that is where the ideologues of capital go to look for how this works. We have to get out of this public sphere of circulation and go to the private sphere of production, where what we are going to see is how capital produces, how it produces itself as the subject of this process. […]

[§3ª. PRODUCTION OF ABSOLUTE SURPLUS-VALUE.

Chapter V. Labor process and valorization process]

We enter the process of production and we find that it is first and foremost a material process where the questions that we initially raised appear, that work is a conscious and voluntary activity, governed by the consciousness of the individual who works, the subject of the labor process is the worker, who uses the means of production. And there appeared the development of different material forms of the means of production: those that enter as raw materials, auxiliary materials... whose materiality is consumed in its entirety each time it is used, the raw materials that become the object of labor, and the instruments of production, some of which are consumed in its entirety each time it is used and others throughout a series of production cycles, and only have to be replaced periodically, when its useful life was exhausted.

In the development of this, an aspect of the materiality of the labor process appears, which is the way in which this work is organized. And here appears the figure of the capitalist who is in charge of the organization of the worker's work, who bought the labor power and belongs to him. When Marx starts he clarifies that in the concrete movement the worker opens credit to the capitalist, but to look at the movement of capital in its purity we are going to consider it the other way around: the worker is indebted to the capitalist and throughout the working day he has to deliver the use value of his commodity. When one looks at the doubly free worker, what we see is that he no longer has *full control* over his individual labor. The control of the organization of work, the decision of what, how and how much is going to be produced now is not an attribute of the direct producer but is separate from the direct producer. But I emphasize that it does not lose the proper capacity of a free individual to control the immediate execution of his individual work. He lost that part, but he is required to have the conscience and will of a free individual in the control of that execution. I say this because there are statements that refer to the fact that the worker lost *all* control over his individual labor process, but then he could not work.

Then this peculiarity appears in the organization of private labor, which is a first step in the socialization of private labor. Because now it is a work carried out privately and independently outwardly, but inwardly there is a free individual who controls the work of another free individual, which is not the individual work of the capitalist. From the point of view of the capitalist, what he controls is someone else's work, and therefore it is a form of social labor.

And with this we move on to the process of valorization, where we see the consumption of this commodity whose use value from the point of view of capital

is to produce more value than it costs. We see in the unfolding of the working day how the worker spends this labor power, disappears from the worker's body, but at the same time produces a new value that did not exist until then. The key to the production of surplus value is that the productivity of the worker's labor is high enough that he can work a greater amount of time in the day than that materialized in the commodities to which the value of his labor power corresponds, that he can give more labor than he receives in return. Consequently, what we are going to find is that the capital advanced in the purchase of labour-power at its value, put into operation during a longer working day than is necessary to reproduce it, in a part of that day produces a new value which comes to replace the labour-power consumed in the day. and the rest of the day produces a new but uncompensated value, which constitutes surplus value. That is why the capital put into the purchase of labour-power is called variable capital, because its normal movement is that its value is multiplied, that it is valorised (regardless of whether the variable capital may be lost by some accident).

[Chapter VI. Constant capital and variable capital]

I skipped the order [Chapter VII ↔ VI[139]], but when we looked at the capital put into the means of production, constant capital, we saw that it is dead labour, it is the product of previous living labour, and that it has no way of reviving and becoming living labour. When one looks at the labor power of the worker, one has before him the product of a previous living labor, that is why it has value, but that product has the capacity to become living labor again, and more living labor than what materialized in it. Therefore, all that happens with regard to the capital put into the means of production is that it is socially necessary abstract labour which was expended in order to be able to produce this commodity, and which has to be recognised again as socially useful labour in the material form which it took, but has no capacity to revive its value. and all that happens is that its value reappears transferred in the value of the product. That is why the name constant capital appears. The possibility of the value of constant capital changing appears, but it has nothing to do with the process of production of surplus value.

So, we have two portions of capital that move in two absolutely opposite ways. The variable capital is consumed in the process of production, it is annihilated, and just as the labour-power of the worker disappears, this commodity carrying this value no longer exists, and this value no longer exists, but the worker is producing a new value: a part comes to replace the variable capital that was consumed. another is surplus value. On the other hand, in constant capital it is not consumed: it is materially transformed and reappears in the value of the commodity.

[Chapter VII. The rate of surplus value]

We have the key from which the money that functions as capital is capable of valorization, and this immediately puts us before the first appearance of circulation: here equality prevails because there is an exchange of equivalents, and what we find is that the worker gives more labor than he receives in exchange and

[139] I have arranged this paragraph and the following according to the original order, since JIC exposes them in disorder.

therefore the labor power of the worker is exploited by the capitalist in the name of capital. Synthetically: the worker is exploited by capital. Not because he sells labor power for less than its value, but because he sells it for its value. What underlies this is that the use value of that commodity for the buyer is that it produces more value than it is worth.

How is this exploitation of the worker by capital expressed? By means of the rate of surplus value: what part of the day the worker worked for free for capital and what was the labor necessary for its reproduction. Here the expression "necessary labor" appears with a new development: before in socially necessary abstract labor, what was necessary was the productive expenditure of the human body that was necessary to produce the commodity, and now it means necessary *to produce the worker*, a determination of what is strictly necessary from the capitalist mode of production appeared. The material form that this division of the day takes is: necessary labor/surplus labor (surplus labor), necessary product/surplus product (surplus product), and value of labor power (variable capital)/surplus value.

Here we have the length of the working day, and what governs the rate of surplus value is the necessary labour: it is not an independent component, it is a residue that goes from the necessary labour to the full extension of the working day. The key to answering the question of surplus value is what happens to the value of labor power and to the working day. Then we will see how the value of labor power ultimately is. Thus we come to the question of the concrete form that the exercise of this general social relation takes. Marx proposes the length of the working day as a concrete form around which he will develop.

In the example I have taken, the need for capital to have a lung of labor power. The other point is that Marx is looking at and unfolding concrete forms, and the concrete form is the antagonistic relationship between worker and capitalist that is taking the form of a relationship that transcends isolated individuals, that tends to find the universe of the sellers of labor power at one pole. at the other pole of the buyers of labor power. What is going to emerge then are the universal worker and the universal capitalist. These universes take the form of the working class and the capitalist class. The antagonistic relationship between seller and buyer takes the form of the class struggle. The necessity of the tendency to universality at each pole is the antagonistic relation of competition within each pole. And there is also the need for the class struggle to take the form of direct regulation by the state. We dwelt on all this not simply as if it sprang from the concrete form, because then the regulation of the working day by the state appears, but by looking at it, so to speak, in the *unfolding* of this relation.

Alejandro: In one of the classes you mentioned that the work of an individual dedicated to the production of his own labor power is not represented in the value of that labor power. It is not clear to me why.

JIC: It is neither a private job nor a social labor. But what is at stake there is complex work in contrast to simple work. The value of labor power can never be determined by the work one does for oneself because it is not social. It does enter

into the value of the workforce that requires an apprenticeship, which is what the learning process costs.

Let's assume simple producers of commodities, to make it easy: a private and independent producer teacher sells his commodity for its value. The value of this commodity enters into the value of labor power, whether it is a special labor force (the teacher has more work) or not. The books that this individual has had to study enter into the value of labor power. So far it seems that this only touches intellectual work. But let's assume that you have to do special work that requires physical strength that can only be developed specifically to have above-normal strength, and you need to go to the gym. That time he spends getting stronger is not part of his work force, but what the gym costs him is. And if this is not normal, his labor power will not cost the same as a normal labor power, but his labor will produce in the same time more value than simple labor, generality. That is the work that will appear multiplied in the value of the product, because it is a work that the producer had to do to have the capacity to produce this commodity that is not normal. Because if it is normal it is compensated for everyone: we all do that work, we need this same amount of commodity, and therefore this is the value of our labor power and this is the value we produce, only associated with the time we are working, immediately producing the commodity. But if there is an individual who has to do abnormal work in order to be in a position to produce this...

When one looks at it against a society where there are links of personal dependence, society assigns to that individual that he will be able to consume more use value because he is not yet in a position to produce. But here there is none: no one is going to pity the individual and say that since he had to study or exercise more... Hump yourself. Here the form of recognition is that when you work and produce your product, that work encompasses the amount of direct work + the amount of exceptional work that you did to produce yourself, that is complex work. But the value of your labor power has nothing to do with the work you did, but with the social labor that others did so that you have labor power.

Within Marxism there are lots of proposals that yes it has to enter, it does not have to enter... Nothing. […] This work has to have certain requirements: it must be social labor and be done privately and independently, only in this way can it produce value. The work that one materialized in one's person is neither social nor private. But when you go to work for others with that development that is not normal, you are recognized that in order to be in a position to work, you had to work more, it will be part of the socially useful work, which you did privately, not directly socially.

[Alexander, apropos of chapter VIII:

1) Ask at what age one begins to sell one's labor power.
2) He asks whether the "simple producers of commodities" (free peasants and artisans) corresponds to concrete historical development.]
3) He mentions that, debating the method, some argued that Marx assumes perfect competition in *Capital*.]

[**1**] Up to this point, age has been placed as a circumstance external to the movement of capital. What must be considered is that the general development revolves around the normality of the reproduction of the movement of social production and consumption. When we start with relative surplus value, for the first time the very form of competition will appear (so far we only talk about antagonism). That remains to be answered.

[**2**] We talked a little about the historical character of mere commodity production last year, but it is important to return to it. Marx began development by saying: "In societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails, social wealth appears as an immense accumulation of commodities, and the commodity as its elementary form." What did we see in Chapter I? The purity, the fullness of social labor done privately and independently, the simplest determination. And we were looking at it within the capitalist mode of production, when we asked ourselves what the commodity is, we were faced with these determinations.

Last time I made a reference (in chapter IV it is raised and in the value developed). Two things happened: commodities are not simple products of labor: they are now the product of labor alienated in capital, therefore they are products of capital. We went out of circulation with the 4 appearances and we were looking at what happens with the production. Now, with the question of the length of the working day or the need of the total capital of society to have labour power always available, we pass to an area where the unity of movement is at stake, which is no longer that of production.

But the other aspect is: when we begin to look in Chapter IV at the relation between capitalist and worker, and then fully when we look at the material process of production, we find for the first time that in the capitalist mode of production there is no fullness of social labour done privately and independently. If up to Chapter III we said that in order to produce commodities the condition was to be the private owner of one's own means of production, in Chapter V what appeared was that in order to produce commodities one must be separated from one's own means of production. And that is no longer the fullness of private labor. Why?

At the end of the development of the materiality of the production process, it appeared that the worker works under the control of the capitalist: he is a free individual who does not have full control over his individual labor. And at the same time, the capitalist is a free individual who has control over the individual labor of another individual. It appeared for the first time that this individual work is not simply individual: it has a social character, there is an individual who works under the command of another and another who commands the work of the first. We no longer have the fullness of private labor, it began to manifest itself that the characteristic of the capitalist mode of production is the socialization of private labor. We could only achieve this by starting from looking at the purity of private labor. We start with the capitalist mode of production, with the *form* that the product has, the product of labor with its double character, SNALdPaI... I don't know if it is relevant whether historically there was a process of simple commodity production or not. In chapter II we saw a very schematic historical unfolding

where it does not even start with the simple production of commodities, but with a simple exchange of commodities between communities (not between individuals), and in this development we are increasingly seeing what could be a private and independent producer in the fullness of its determinations. But we didn't care because what we wanted to see was not what happened to that individual historically, whether he subsisted or not, but how the condition of money falls on gold, giving the gold producers the privilege that the product of their private labor is recognized as immediately social.

I remarked when we started all development from within the capitalist mode of production because of what is posed from the outset, because we are subjects of the capitalist mode of production and what we want to answer is with respect to our own condition as subjects and these are the determinations that we have. Now, there is a whole discussion in Marxism about whether Marx considered that there was a simple production of production and whether the historical genesis of capitalism comes from it or not. Especially in the currents in vogue today, which come from the proposals of Isaak Rubin, there is the proposal that Marx did not think that there was a simple production of commodities prior to the capitalist mode of production and that it is an invention of Engels.

In contrast to this, when we look at Chapter I, Marx says something like: the development of the simple form of value is the development of the genesis of the commodity. With which a proposal of this concrete historical character appears. When we began to look at what a worker selling labor power is, his contrast was with a simple producer of commodities, and Marx posed: let's take it as it comes — in historical development—, what was it that a simple producer of commodities consumed in order to reproduce himself, and the only difference is that it was separate... When we looked at the length of the working day and the rate of surplus value, there was no determination outside of what could come from the previous historical process. I don't want to get ahead of myself because it's the penultimate chapter of Volume 1, which we have to get to this year (the original accumulation). Now: there is a part in Volume 3 (all of them are clear that Volume 3 was a draft) where Marx literally says that before the capitalist mode of production there is a simple production of commodities, and at the end of Volume 1, what he is going to develop has this implicit. Engels is accused of having changed the place of the draft paragraph, but the paragraph was there, whether it is in one place or another.

Marx's exposition is... Taking historical development as if it were the origin of the capitalist mode of production, surplus value appears and an individual who is a simple producer of commodities who existed before surplus value and who has now been separated from his means of production. I tend to take it more as if there is a development here from the simplest forms (it does not matter if there is a historical development) to increasingly complex concrete forms that confront us with the fullness of the development of the capitalist mode of production. But no one can say that in Marx's development there are no references to a historical process where there are simple producers of commodities. From my point of view, a society of simple producers of commodities in their purity is impossible, because they lack the way to establish the operation of unity.

When Smith makes the development he is taking a society of simple producers of commodities (for him it is natural, it is the origin of human life), very quickly he will explain the difference between the *commercial price* and *the natural price* (the value), the difference between the value that is expressed in money and the commercial price. What we saw of the divergences between how the indirect unity between social production and consumption is established, commodities that are sold below or above value, in that chapter Marx does not put anything about the mechanism through which this is realized. It says: this happens, it's the content. There is no way. Smith develops form from the outset, and form in a simple commodity production is impossible.

Let's take Mrs. s and Mr. *G*. There are too many gnocchi and too few shoes. Mr. *G* cannot start producing s because he does not have the means of production that are needed: each independent producer of commodities is tied to his means of production. Here the form is inexplicable, and this does to what you were saying about competition: competition is not present as a mechanism of unity, which is mentioned but not deployed. In my opinion, in a society of simple producers of commodities where the antagonistic character of the competitive relationship already appears, there is a finding that there is no material way for the movement from one branch of production to another.

When one looks at it in the historical process, where there are commodity productions, in general there is a direct social relationship that gives unity to the movement, there is some direct authority that gives unity. In feudal society there are feudal guilds: Mr. *G* belongs to the guild *G* who tells him: if we are going to produce too many *G*, you have to produce so much, you so much, and you so much... And they have a real dispensation that says that no one else can produce *G*, even if the people are dying of hunger because they are missing. And the same with respect to the *S*. And that is what establishes unity. So, the fullness of the commodity (and Marx is going to propose this several times) is always achieved in the capitalist mode of production. That is why for me it is not relevant to propose what existed before: it is preferable to pose it as these are the determinations that one sees: a given day, a given value of the labor force, given productive attributes (there is a doubly free individual)... and we didn't stop to look at it.

[**3**] Since Marx does not deal with the forms of competition here (only in the chapter on primitive accumulation does he make a reference and explains why he is going to dwell on that), it is nonsense to say that it presupposes perfect competition or whatever. That is a fantasy of neoclassical economics. There is a very marked difference with respect to what we said about the unity between social production and consumption. When neoclassical economics looks at the elasticity of demand and supply, crossed and so on, it never thinks that it is looking at the general unity of social production and consumption, and that consequently in order to explain why it moves in one way or another, the first thing it has to do is to explain that unity.

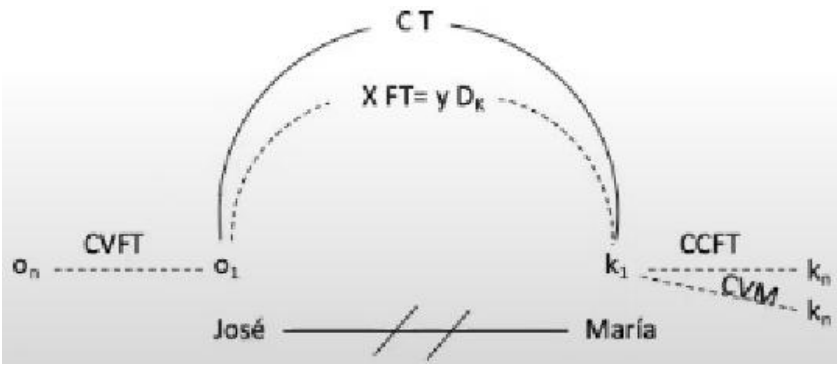
What is a social need? So far we have said that there is a solvent social need, but we do not explain why one thing is solvent and why something else is not. Neoclassical economics, the only thing that Marx sees where Marx develops this

unity, are isolated movements that pretend to explain absolutely through the form they say the market has, instead of explaining the exchange of equivalents and consequently the imposition of value as a rule of exchange and its deviations, it looks at the deviations as if they were self-explanatory. Why are there people who question Marx about this, attacking him? Since they think that value is determined by utility and scarcity and by the abstract will of individuals, they do not take any explanation that transcends this, but they do not know what to answer when I ask them why the friend's gnocchi are priceless.

When Marx's supposed defense makes this statement, it is because it is thinking in terms of a logical representation and not of the reproduction of the concrete through thought. We were deploying what we had in front of us and the problem of what shape the market has did not appear. Marx will develop the determinations of competition in Volume 3. When it has appeared what governs competition, around what competition is established, what governs the unity between social production and consumption... Even in that place, the full mechanisms of competition, of the movement of capital, will not be developed. The problem is that one cannot explain what happens in the life of society by the forms that the market has, but one has to explain how social production and consumption are organized in order to explain what form the market has.

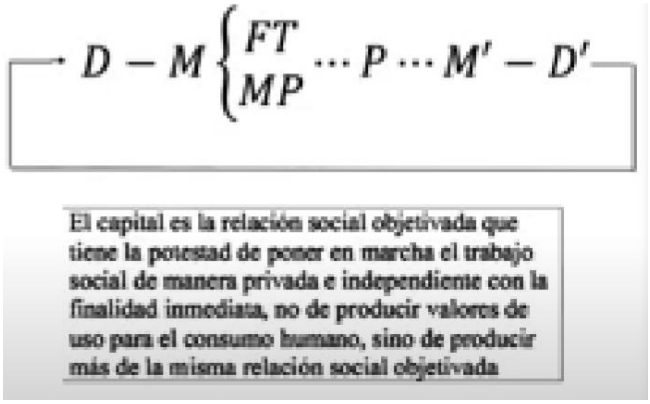
[II]

Last time we arrived at what Marx unfolds in the chapter on the working day, where classes, the state and their direct regulation of the working day appear. I proposed to go beyond the deployment of these concrete forms and ask ourselves what is the content of what is emerging. In that development, I'm going to go back to the scheme we were looking at [...].



We were looking at the process of social life. There were 2 people who were mutually free, without any direct personal ties, and how they socially related to each other through the production and exchange of commodities. We had Joseph, who sells his labor power and relates to Mary, who buys her for a sum of money, and that determines them as personifications: worker and capitalist. As

personifications they enter into a conscious and voluntary direct relationship that is the contract of sale, in this case the employment contract. The relationship between buyer and seller of labor power is antagonistic: what each one wants to personify his commodity is the opposite of what the other has to do to personify his. But there was another antagonistic relation between the workers as all sellers of the same commodity, and between the capitalists as buyers of the same commodity (labour-power) and as sellers of all commodities except labour-power. The unity of the movement of this social relation lay in the scheme of the cycle of money as capital:


$D - M \begin{cases} FT \\ MP \end{cases} \cdots P \cdots M' - D'$
El capital es la relación social objetivada que tiene la potestad de poner en marcha el trabajo social de manera privada e independiente con la finalidad inmediata, no de producir valores de uso para el consumo humano, sino de producir más de la misma relación social objetivada

... and, therefore,[140] to produce more capacity to set in motion social labor without unity with respect to social consumption and as a movement that cannot be controlled, all that can be done is to personify it. If the capitalist stops the movement, he has lost his social relationship and will die. Consequently, we had capital as the concrete subject of this process of social life. It is a process of human life – the subjects are human beings – which nevertheless takes the concrete form, is governed, through capital being the one that operates *as if it were* the concrete subject, the one that sets in motion the movement in order to satisfy its own need, and people act as its personifications.

We had argued that the movement of capital has the condition that at all times there is labor power available for valorization, and that since it is a system that regulates itself autonomously, the only way to always have labor power for capital is that there is a lung of labor power, which is produced in excess of the size that corresponds to the social need that capital has in the immediacy of capital. her. This need for the total capital of society clashes with its own need for labor power to reproduce under normal conditions. It is a normal condition that labor power can be sold for its value, even if it is excessive. What concrete form does the development of this need for capital take?

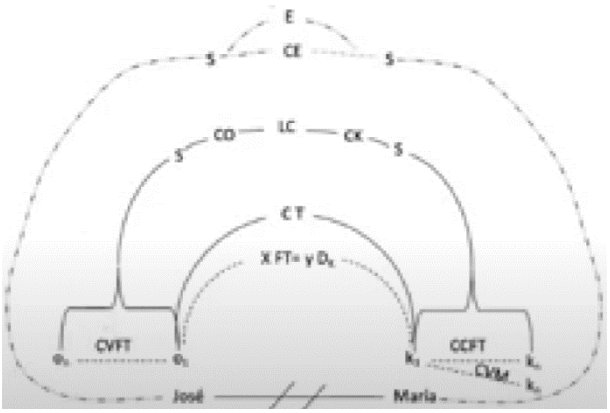
It cannot be personified by individual capitalists, because if one capitalist pays his workers the value of labor power and the others pay it below the value because there is too much, he will be defeated in competition. And consequently, the satisfaction of this contradictory need for the total capital of society needs to be carried first of all in the personifications that have the sale of labor power for its

[140] Continuing what is written in the image above.

value as a condition of their own reproduction: the workers, who give to that competition that leads them to sell labor power below value the form of a relationship of solidarity, as if it were a single block of labor force. We looked at the scope of these relations of solidarity (unions by company, by branch...) and we had narrowed it down by national spaces, because it is the concrete form that is particularly marked in our society and that since competition is a universal antagonistic relationship, this relationship of solidarity extends beyond national borders as a global solidarity. We emphasized: it is not that competition has disappeared, but that it takes the form of solidarity.

We saw the same thing from the point of view of the capitalists, who also establish this relationship of solidarity. And we have that one is at one or the other pole of the relationship not by personal attributes, as in previous societies, but one is classified in that condition of personification: one ceases to be a personification of labor power, one becomes the personification of capital, one falls into the other class, and vice versa. In so far as this relation tends to be universal, by the pole of the sellers of labour-power it tends to constitute a universal worker (working class) and the same at the pole of the capitalists. And the antagonistic relationship between buyer and seller of labor power no longer has the character of an individual antagonistic relationship but between the two poles of solidarity (working class and capitalist) and its form is the class struggle.

We have said that the class struggle has an infinite number of forms. We said that if this satisfies the need of the total capital of society for labor power to be sold at the same time for its value, the very form of this social relation (the class struggle), which is a relation alienated in capital, needs to take a concrete form where this antagonism is replaced by a relation of solidarity which presents itself as an expression of the common interest of society. And that at the same time that relation, as it is a carrier, an expression of the unity of the process of social metabolism that we are cutting, the unity of that movement *is* the movement of the total capital of society, and so far the total capital of society did not appear to have its own personification. Individual capitalists personify their individual capitals, and the capitalist class in their relationship of solidarity. But its needs in its immediacy are not the same as those of the total capital of society. So we have the relationship of citizenship, which is entered under the appearance that it is a relationship of solidarity between free people, but that its content is a relationship between personifications: to be a citizen one must be a free individual, and to be free one must be able to buy and sell commodity, and therefore be a personification.



The relationship of citizenship is not simply that relationship that we are looking at so far: it is the relationship of citizenship of *the state*, which is a social relationship with an objectified existence, representative of the total capital of society and its needs. When we look at this, what we had before us is the unity of the general social relation, its concrete form. It is a relationship between people that has the form of no relationship between people, but of an indirect relationship between things, which bind people together and which determines the consciousness and will of these people as personifications of that objectified social relationship and who enter into this direct conscious and voluntary relationship that is the contract.

In the part of the CVFT scheme, [141] another line would be needed, which is the competition personified by the workers and the capitalists. Apart from the antagonistic relation between personifications, it appeared that the necessity of the total capital of society to have surplus labour-power and at the same time to be sold for its value took the concrete form of the relation of solidarity between the workers as a form of their competition for the individual sale of their labour-power. the same in the pole of the capitalists, etc. [...]. That in turn, as the general antagonistic character of these two poles shows, it needs to take a concrete form in which this antagonistic character appears to be erased, as a general interest, which is not an abstract appearance, but the reproduction of the process of social metabolism under this form: this relationship of solidarity is the relationship of citizenship, a relationship between personifications under the appearance of being a relationship between people. Citizenship up to now was basically *national* citizenship, by the blood of the ancestors or by the soil, as if it had the capacity to produce individuals with a certain nature. And that, when an individual whose blood and soil are not recognized acquires the relationship of citizenship within a certain sphere, it is called "naturalization". And we had the state as the bearer of the general need of the capitalist mode of production.

This is what we deployed last time. We saw the national fragmentation of the world unity of capital accumulation, as an expression of the private character of labor. I think we came to look at the example of the 2nd International and the First World War [...], and how over and above class solidarity, given this fragmentation of world unity and the relation of competition that arises from the private

[141] Purchase and sale of labor power.

character of labour (bearer of all the antagonistic relations we are seeing), the private fragment of social labour imposes itself on the relation of class solidarity and a relation of solidarity is established between the two countries. the capitalist class and the working class of a country.

[JIC proposes to clarify doubts and dwell on the issue of the reference to a superstructure in chapter II, and the nature of its relationship with the base.]

Javiera: [1] I have a doubt about this when the state becomes the bearer of the general interest of society, that step where individual capital cannot personify that place because it seeks its own interest and would endanger the survival of the working class. [2] And another one that came up now about the fact that the class struggle is always present but has an infinite number of forms, because when one was taught these things in a "formalistic" way, the class struggle was like a very specific moment that society reached at a certain moment, not as something that was always present.

JIC: [1] I unfolded the development from the simplest point of that social relationship between people that has the form of no relationship between people and I unfolded it. When one looks at the concrete development of the state, one cannot say that there is the individual capitalist and then the capitalist class arises, and then the state. One unfolds it and sees that the capitalist state is a form of this general social relation: there is no capitalist production without the state.

When one looks at the historical development of the state in these general terms, one finds that there is a moment... We said this: the individual capitalists cannot personify for themselves the necessity of buying and selling labor for its value, nor the other determination to shorten the working day, because those who pay below value will beat it in competition. What immediately appears is the need that unity cannot be expressed by isolated individuals. But this capitalist state is composed only of members of the capitalist class, even in the greatest "purity" of the triumph of the bourgeoisie over feudal relations. It is a state where the only ones who act are capitalists, but then they begin to act in the name of the capitalist class, but in the name of the total capital of society. Then, they clash with the workers over the length of the working day.

As a class, they cannot say: let's agree the whole capitalist class and put a limit on the working day. Since they are all free subjects because they are alienated in capital, the limitation of the working day must be presented to the capitalist class itself as something that is external and that is opposed to its interests as a capitalist class by a state that is only made up of members of the capitalist class, but in order to be able to act themselves as individual capitalists according to the needs of the unity of the process of metabolism [need] this power to impose on them externally the limitation of the working day.

A very expressive example appears with the issue of child labour. Marx is going to quote a report where a factory inspector in England quotes a worker who tells him: we have to be forced not to send our children to work, because if there is no

obligation to send them to school, we have no choice but to send them to work. Then the first law regulating child labor appeared in a state where there were only representatives of the capitalist class. Then it appears to all members of society that there are conditions that can only be satisfied on condition that they appear imposed by a direct social relationship that seems to spring from the consciousness and will of free individuals, but which has the power to impose itself on the conscience and will of free individuals. If not, it cannot take shape.

The state appears as the "management committee of the capitalist class" (I don't know if in the *Manifesto* or in another text), but it has to be the management committee that is above the capitalist class in the sense of expressing the needs of the unity of capital accumulation. One need not go far to see it: what do individual capitalists express every day when they say that prohibitions on dismissal must be removed? That is the dream of the individual capitalist, and of the capitalist class. Capital is the necessity of the class struggle, of the antagonism of the workers against the capitalist class... [...][142]. The capitalist class could not by itself express this need of the total capital of society for surplus labour power and payment for its value, or for the working day to have a certain duration: it needs the class struggle for this need to take shape. And it will take shape in the form of the action of the state as the representative of the total capital of society, of the unity of the process of social metabolism.

Last time I mentioned that there are two approaches that seem absolutely opposed but share the same conception of the exteriority of the state with respect to the movement of capital. One says that if the state did not exist, capitalism would have developed in its fullness, and the other is the other way around, which says that if the state did not exist, capitalism would have already disappeared. Both share the image of an external relationship between state and capital, and the capitalist state is a form of capital, the form that is the bearer of the unity of movement. Up to this point, the normal conditions are the reproduction of labor power. Then we are going to see that normal conditions can be far from that, and then the state can take concrete forms completely opposed to what we have seen so far.

Another thing I mentioned is that, when you look at the state, you see that it reproduces the simplest form that the general social relation has in the capitalist mode of production, which is the commodity. It appears to spring from the consciousness and will of individuals who are free by nature, and has an objectified existence that confronts these free individuals with the power to dominate them. When one looks at the discussions about ideological appearances, about the state being external, that it should be one of well-being, that it should not exist or whatever, what one is seeing is the reproduction of fetishistic consciousness. He is seeing a social relationship that seems to spring from the free will of individuals with the power to dominate them.

[**2**] On the different expressions [of the class struggle]... When a collective bargaining agreement is signed, it is an expression of the class struggle. When

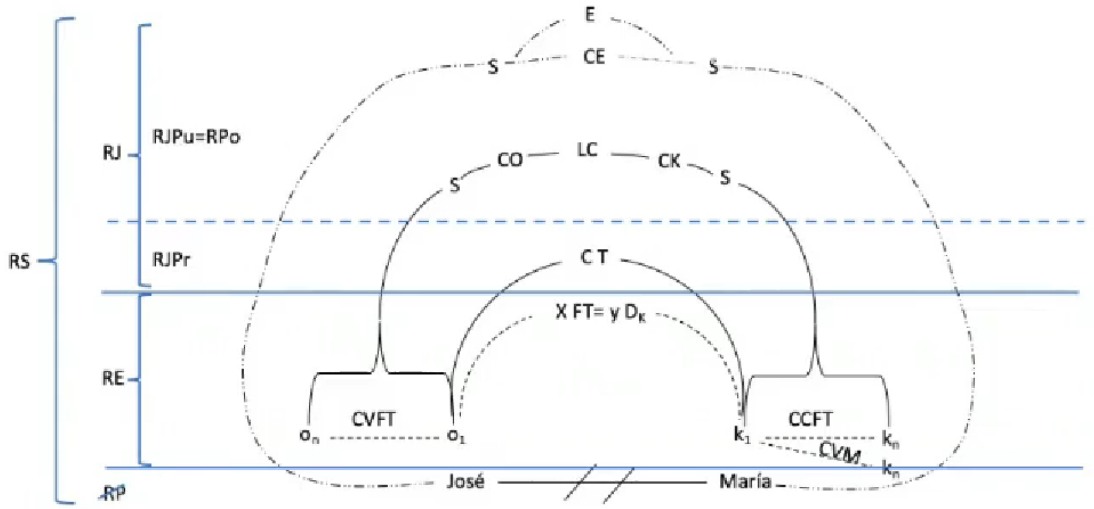
[142] The recording is cut for a few minutes.

there is a strike, even if it is partial, there is also a general strike or a lockout of capitalists, and the classes are being pitted against each other, transcending the immediate moment because it affects all the sellers/buyers of labor power. There is no capitalist mode of production without class struggle, just as there is no capitalist mode of production without the state. They are as inherent in it as money. Depending on what is being transformed into the materiality of the labor process (we will look at it when we get to relative surplus value) among others (but this is in essence), what type of worker capital needs, if it has or does not have too many workers, if they have to incorporate them from elsewhere, if they need them to have certain attributes or if they no longer need them, What one is going to see is that the State, as a representative of the unity of its movement, is changing its face. If the state needs workers with an extended educational development, it will be the bearer of the development of education. When that process of accumulation no longer needs them, it will annihilate that process of education. This is what will govern the content of the action of the state, it is the movement of the total capital of society, and the first point of departure is what happens with the materiality of labor.

[Organic relationship between base and superstructure]

If we return to the schema of the concrete form of the general social relation in the capitalist mode of production, we have a unity with an organic character. There is no exchange of commodities that does not take the form of a contract of sale. There is no contract for the purchase and sale of labor power that does not have the form of the class struggle, and in turn the individual contract is determined by the class struggle. There is no action by the state that does not operate on the needs of the materiality of the labor process. We unfolded this organic unity starting from its simplest form. Now I propose to you to do an inverse process, of analysis of what we have been deploying.

What happens when one analyzes is that the organic unity of that subject from which it started, which was in front of it, is destroyed. I always say that I remember an experience in high school in which we dissected a frog. The first thing to do is to kill it, to take away its organicity, then you open it and you discover the parts of the frog. We are going to do the same with the clear that we do not have to kill organicity, but that what we are going to analyze, in order to appropriate its operation, we have to look at it in its unity.



We had the social relation in its unity [diagram above]. This is a social relationship between people (content) that has the form of no relationship between people, but that of a relationship between things: commodity, money, labor power (which is a commodity)... When you look at this indirect relationship between things, it is commonly called "economic relations": buying and selling, competition... But commodities do not change themselves: they have to be carried by their owners, who relate directly in their condition as personifications, determined by this indirect relationship that they enter into these direct relations: the labor contract, the class struggle, the relationship of citizenship and the state. And that set of direct relationships is what is commonly known as "legal relationships". And this is what Marx says when he first looks at the process of commodity exchange.

When we look at these legal relationships, they are essentially differentiated by their scope. Some involve individuals immediately, they are between one individual and another. There are legal relationships that have a greater scope, usually cutting out a private unit, from the movement of commodities. And there are legal relationships that have a scope that ranges from universal to others of a general nature. As Fernando once developed, when one looks at the employment contract, one appears in a situation in which it is a private legal relationship and at the same time transcends it because it puts at stake the reproduction of the general unity of the process of capital accumulation. Thus, according to this scope, a distinction is made between private legal relations (RJPr) and public legal relations (RJPu) or political relations (RPo).

When we look at the state here, we can go a step further in specifying its condition, because it is not simply the representative of the total capital of society. Its sphere of action is that of political relations, it is the *political* representative of the total capital of society. If the state has a company that produces some use value, in that case it acts as a subject of RJPr. When he acts as a representative of the total capital of society, he acts as a political subject. The class struggle is the realm of political relations. If we look again at the organic unity of this social relation, we can say that it is a direct relation between persons which takes the form of an indirect relation between things which determines the consciousness and will of those persons as personifications, who as such personifications give form to that

indirect relation by entering into juridical and political relations. And we have that this [under the horizontal line of the scheme] is the economic base, and this [above the line] the legal and political superstructure.

The original term in German is in the prologue to the *Contribution*, and it refers to things that stick out, that are ornaments on a wall, not simply that it is raised on top, but that it projects beyond the base. And here what we have proposed is a relationship in which the legal and political superstructure *is the way in which* the movement of the base is carried out. There is no indirect movement of exchange of commodities which does not have the form of a legal relation, and there is no juridical relation which does not have as its content something which will modify the exchange of commodities, which will be the bearer of an exchange of commodities even though it appears to be absolutely alien to their immediate movement (e.g., education, etc.). which brings into play what attributes the commodity labor power must have in order to serve capital).

So, from the point of view that I am deploying, the concrete forms of development of capital, that is, the base-superstructure relationship, where a question also appears in contrast (I made the reference to the class struggle as specific or as general)... Because in the capitalist mode of production the base-superstructure is clearly separated because they are two different forms of relationship. The question is whether in a society of bonds of personal dependence, whatever their character, this marked differentiation can be made, because what there are are direct links between people with more or less general scope, but they never have the form of an indirect link through things.

[Alejandro raises the issue of capital as a subject and religion, the reference to the fact that in religion the human being appears dominated by the product of his imagination and in capital by the product of his own labor.]

I would take this: they are two forms of alienated social relations, where the human being faces the product of his own powers as if they were alien and dominated him. It is a consequence of the insufficient historical development of the human being. One of the things that Marx is going to propose is that this is human prehistory[143]. Now, there is another aspect where this determination appears.

We have already spoken of the human being as a historical subject, saying that each human generation encounters a world produced by work, by the conscious and voluntary action of the previous generation, and that is why the human being is the subject of his own history. And when we look at this process in the religious conception, in religious alienation (in the *Manuscripts* of 1844 he raises things about this), the human being is alienated in his generic condition: he sees himself as a finite being, so to speak, who has nothing but his individual life, and the generic life is in the afterlife. It is then reduced to the condition of the animal, because the animal does not know itself to be generic. The generic condition is then placed outside the human being.

[143] Reference to the prologue to the *Contribution*.

When one looks at capital, the generic condition is placed on it, it is the one that carries as its concrete subject the development of the productive forces. So, what one has is a different form of alienation but one that has the same thing, that one cannot recognize oneself as a generic being. Among the expressions of this is the "I do what I do for my children", neither for myself (because I do not recognize myself as a generic being and therefore I do not deserve it) nor for the human being in general, I can only recognize that I have reproduced in my animal condition in these individuals, in the rest not because I do not see myself as carrying a generic condition with the rest.

They are two forms of alienation corresponding to different modes of production. Monotheistic religions start where there was commodity production (there are also polytheistic religions as in Greece, of course). Now, Jewish society had been characterized by a strong development of mercantile ties. It takes all the elements of the previous religious forms and translates them into a single subject. In any case, it springs up in a mode of production that is not capitalist. That religion is changing, from playing a central role in the genesis of the capitalist mode of production, to becoming a form of the capitalist mode of production.

You told me if capital has a real existence or is it a product of the human mind. It is a social relation that has an objectified existence. Divinity has also become an objectified existence: it is born of a religion where the objectified existence of the divinity is not allowed and it is turned around and takes the form of an objectifiable divinity (it depends on the different forms of Christianity and so on, but that would require a more detailed discussion). What does it mean then if it is real...? It is an objectified existence, it operates as that objectified existence, it is a relationship between persons: the subjects of human life are persons, but it exists materially and has the form of a relationship between things that has acquired autonomy in its movement, in the sense that we people respond to the needs of that relationship between things. Our consciousness is free from bonds of personal dependence because it carries the need for this indirect social bond, it is alienated in capital. It is not "God", as someone says out there and attributes to me: it is capital as a concrete thing; to believe that he is confused with God is to invert the determinations of consciousness, to abstract the content of the specific social relation, which is the intention with which the argument that he is like God is made, to empty it of content in order to be able to say anything about content and form.

What happens when one cuts off the unity of that social relationship and only looks at the economic form or only at the juridical and political form? What do you see? What character is given to this relation when it is not seen as one between content and form, but rather as an external relation because it is subject to logical representations (for it all relations must be external)? How do you explain the nature of the relationship between the economic base and the political superstructure? I hope you will come next day with many issues to discuss about that and then we will move on to the first chapter of relative surplus value, and if we overcome it we move on to cooperation.

[III]

Randy: I had a doubt. I wanted to refer to Marx's prologue[144] where the distinction between infrastructure and superstructure appears, and there he says two things: that this theoretical guide is something he arrived at, and that on the other hand, once he found the theoretical guide, it served as a guiding thread for his studies. I find this curious. I understand that this guide, as something he arrived at, allows us to think that these categories (also because Marx is inscribed in a "Hegelian" tradition) are not simple *a prioris*, that they do not apply to a given external object, which is all that Fichte, Schelling and Hegel are going to discuss with Kant because he cannot explain why the object is given to me and corresponds to the categories with which it is given to me. I analyze.

I wonder if the analysis of the infra-superstructure relationship would not imply another leap in thought in relation to the deployment we are making. Because the unfolding that we are doing, I understand it as the unfolding of the consciousness that is being known, a process that every individual must repeat because no one is born enlightened, let's say, and the starting point is this kind of "state of nature," if you will, where relationships are presented externally. It is as if the base and the superstructure were two forms of externality and we have not yet come to ask ourselves about the relationship, or to formulate it in terms of pure thought.

JIC: I was surprised by the "state of nature".

Randy: I mean, to use a concept from other traditions. I am referring to the state in which... Every subject must repeat the process of knowledge because in their "natural" state, given, these relations always present themselves as something external, and the process of consciousness was thought of as... To know those determinations that are presented to us in this way at the beginning.

JIC: I don't know if I would put it in those terms. Knowledge is the process in which the individual governs his action and produces himself. But that is not the axis I wanted to target. In part, what I wanted to develop today is what the character of that relationship is, but you introduce another aspect related to that. Why did Marx want to put it in the prologue and in those terms? Only Marx could know. What consequences has this setting there had? That is what I think one has to ask oneself. There it is placed as an external relationship, almost like a recipe. Marx in the same prologue says something like: "I had a long prologue, but in the end I decided not to include it because anticipating what must be demonstrated can only annoy..." And then what it does is advance it.

I would take what you propose with respect to this way in which Marx presents it in contrast to what we have been doing, and also looking at the character of the relationship between base and superstructure. Marx uses a term that is "conditions" (I always say "determines"). I argued last time that the terms "base" and "superstructure", especially the latter, are not literal translations of the German term, it is something that emerges, it is not simply that something is below

[144] That of Contribution.

and the other above. I would take this and go on to look at the different forms of relationship that appear between the economic base and the legal superstructure.

In the development of *Capital*, Marx makes these terms appear for the first time after he unfolded the determinations of the commodity, the consciousness of the producers of the commodity, and when it goes into circulation what he says is that this economic relation takes the form of the juridical relation of the contract. It reappears after it has unfolded the determinations of capital, the concrete form that the general social relation has, where there is no relation, but the social classes and the state appear, the direct regulation of the process of social metabolism as a form of this indirect regulation through the valorization of capital. [...][145].

We said that this is a social relationship, always between people (content), but it has the peculiarity of having the form of no relationship between people, of an indirect relationship between things, between commodities that can enter into a relationship of exchange. It is this fact that determines the consciousness and will of the owners of commodities as personifications of their commodities. This indirect relationship through things takes place in the concrete form of direct, conscious, and voluntary relations between personifications. When one analytically, destroying the organic unity of the relation, says: there are no personal relations, [but] between things (economic: competition and exchange), what form do these indirect relations between persons and direct relations between things take? That of legal and political relations. So here there is a development of a content that takes a form, which in turn encloses a power that realizes it by taking a form, which in turn has a power to realize. And consequently, when one speaks of determination, what one is saying is the way in which this content is necessarily realized.

This content does not exist abstractly expressing itself identically, it only exists and is realized in this form. I see a legal form and what I see is a movement of the indirect relationship between commodities. I see a change of commodities and what I am seeing is the content of a legal relationship. This is the character of the relationship that we are facing so far, that something determines something means that the first something is fulfilling its need by taking the concrete form of the other something, and that is the relationship between base and superstructure. Within the superstructure one is going to see movements that, again, there is a determination of a general nature that takes on specific specific forms. Therefore, determination is never an external relation. And here 3 things arise.

1) Marx, in the prologue to the *Contribution,* uses the word "conditions", which is an external relation, it is said *together* with the other, it is not that one is the form or the content of the other: the two appeared together, that this which is by itself, is subject to some relation to this other which is also by itself.

2) In what other ways do you look at the relationship between base and superstructure (e.g., within Marxism)? I take it with some concrete expressions

[145] Small cut due to technical problems.

because there is a first step in this that Engels is going to take. Engels, accused of being an economist and mechanist within the party itself, tried to clarify something that, from my point of view, obscures. He says: in reality we did not say that the economic was what governed everything, it is something that determines the superstructure, but it has a certain independence (the term "relative autonomy" appears later), but the basis is the determining one "in the last instance". The superstructure then acts on the base with that "certain independence" that it has and "affects" the base. That is an external relationship that can never explain how this operates. Because if something determines the other thing, but the other has relative autonomy... Which is a contradiction in its terms: if it is autonomous, it is named by itself, and if it is relative, it can only be named in relation to the other. So there is something that goes in one direction and determines the other, but in turn it comes back in this direction and determines it, but in turn it comes back in the first direction and determines...

And to me the synthesis, which is more crude, but at the same time seemed clearer to me with respect to the impossibility of giving a content to that relationship (to say: "well, the character of this relationship is this: what does it mean that it returns, that it affects it?") is a text that I lost, until someone brought me the exact bibliographic citation —and it was more crude than I had proposed it— and I lost the same quote... There is one of those things that I consider very unhappy for the political action of the working class in particular, which are memes (but since political discussion now has the form of memes...), which says that I attribute this story to Althusser, and it is not he who says it, but an Althusserian. I always put it with the example of a dog, but it is a human being who is tied with a chain to a post, along the length of the chain he has autonomy but beyond the chain he is determined "ultimately" in his autonomy by the chain.

When someone has to use that figure to explain that relationship, it is because it is absolutely inexplicable. And if one does not explain the character of that relationship, one cannot know whether one is unfolding the relationship on its axis or whether it deviated from the axis to explain it. Because Gramsci has a reference to this type of approach and then he talks about not falling into "economism" or (I don't know if it is) "politicism". If you don't know what the nature of the relationship is, you can't know if it's falling to one side or the other, you end up reduced to a quantitative problem. And to know whether one deviated or not, you need to have a rule.

Marx in Volume 3 has a reference to: one cannot explain the norm by deviations, but deviations by the norm. Because the norm has this content, the permanent deviation. Since the value of commodities has a norm—the amount of abstract socially necessary labor materialized privately and independently in them—then one can see when it deviated from the norm. And the way in which the norm is carried out is through permanent deviation precisely because social labor is done privately and independently. There are approaches in economics (we did not talk about this at the time, I think) where the explanation of price is established through imbalances of supply and demand. Marx deals with this at one point where he says: when supply and demand are equalized, their effect disappears,

then they cannot explain anything. The explanation has to come from what the rule is.

There are proposals within Marxism in this direction. If commodities are always sold for their value regardless of how unbalanced supply and demand are, there is no way of knowing what the norm is, movement cannot be governed by the norm. I am going to advance one thing: if supply and demand determined the value of commodities, today, when it is public and notorious that labor power in Argentina is sold brutally below its value, what would have to be said is that it is being sold for its value, and then the working class has nothing to claim. because what is just in the capitalist mode of production is the sale of commodities for their value. What one also has to ask is what political necessity underlies, takes shape in this statement that supply and demand enter into the determination of value put into the mouths of individuals who present themselves as critics of the capitalist mode of production. If Milei said it, I would be clear about the reason why he says it, but when people who present themselves as critical say it, one has to ask oneself what need of the general social relationship they are personifying.

Another type of explanation in Marxism is the functional explanation. Stalin begins with an explanation of a purely mechanical nature and then moves on to a functional one. But functionalism in Marxism has a very marked expression in analytic Marxism, and in particular in Cohen, who argues that the base is functional to the development of the productive forces, and that the superstructure has to be functional to the base. This implies a coexistence of bases and superstructures as two independent things, that one exists to serve the other, and he is going to put it with the figure that the loose columns are unstable and that to give them stability the roof (the superstructure) is needed, functional to the need of the base to remain stable. There is a marked externality in the relationship, to the point where images appear within analytical Marxism regarding the capitalist mode of production that there was a society of feudal communities and by an accidental mutation a mercantile society emerges, and since this mercantile community is more functional to the development of the productive forces than the feudal ones, in competition it displaces them until it becomes the universal form. These are explanations that fit the modern Darwinist versions regarding the mutation of living subjects.

The mechanical explanation that the base determines the superstructure but it has a relative autonomy ends up deriving in the fact that everything determines everything, it is an indefinite coming and going (it is not possible to define what character it has), or what is the same: nothing determines anything. And this is the approach that derives from the postmodern proposals that there is no direction, determination, meaning, it cannot be known, and it does not matter. And once again, one has to ask oneself what political necessity takes shape in these expressions. This is the second thing I wanted to ask you.

3) What happens if one cuts off the unfolding of the organicity of this general social relation? What happens if when you reach the economic base you cut off deployment? What appears to him is that commodities are objects that can be exchanged by nature, that is fetishistic consciousness. Classical political economy

says that all human labor produces changeable things, which is in the nature of human labor. Neoclassical economics, Austrian economics, take the step that follows that because it is immediate, there is no longer the mediation of labor: everything that is useful and scarce is changeable, it is a natural attribute of things. In the texts of Smith and Ricardo naturalization appears, they literally say that "it is natural" that things should be changed in this proportion. In one of the founders of neoclassical economics, Walras, it appears that value is natural because of its content (and because of several other things that I don't remember).

What happens when one naturalizes the social relationship? Since this social relation thus far appears as a relation between free individuals, human freedom appears not as a historical social relation (personal freedom), but as a state of nature. What follows this? That if this is natural, any action that seems to transcend the immediate movement of the economic base, the appearance that the movement of commodities, of capital, acts without taking any other form than the movement itself (i.e., the market), appears to be unnatural.

In classical economics, as it was still recognized as political economy, it did not appear with the same degree of naturalization: it was natural among free individuals, but it was not against nature not to pursue personal interest and to pretend that the general interest was being expressed. In neoclassical economics this appears openly and we hear it in everyday discourses today: "the political caste spoils nature", any political relationship would be unnatural. And this takes shape in neoclassical economics in Pareto's "optimal welfare of society", and that is that no one can improve his total well-being without deteriorating that of another individual. And consequently, in a society in which there are only two individuals, and one has 1% of the product of society and the other 99%, it would be unnatural to do something to move it to 2%/98%: the total welfare of society deteriorated because it improved that of one but worsened that of another.

Cutting off the unity of the social relationship has these manifestations, this concrete expression. But what happens if one cuts it backwards, and considers that the social relations between people start beyond the relations between things? It is the same naturalization. Ignoring the determination of the consciousness of the owners of commodities as their personifications, in political relations they appear as abstractly free individuals by nature with opposing interests. So, each one depends on the free will and free interests of individuals.

In the first meeting last year, when we talked about the translations of *Capital*, I referred to a term that appears in the translation of Siglo XXI and in the new one of FCE that Roces made before he died, and if I remember correctly it was in some more (not in the old one by Roces, nor in the one by Justo, nor in that of [Sacristán?], in that of Akal as well), and it is placed: the "economic-social formation" instead of the "economic formation of society". So it is being said that the economic would be separated from the social, because otherwise it would be saying "social-social" and that expression would not make any sense. Why the need to change the meaning of development that is proposed there (which is difficult to translate because of the German structure, but it is also translated into English), to change the terms so that the economic base appears separate from the social

relation? Then the proposals appear that modes of production that correspond to the economic base are those that exist within each unit of production, but the general unity would be given by the social formation, excluding the economic base of the social relationship.

What do you think about these issues? [...] In the Center[146] we have a discussion regarding the mediation of virtuality in the possibilities of discussion, of debate of what is being proposed. And for me, as I have become friends with virtuality, they defeat me by telling me that discussions are held in person, which I question because it is not always like that, but that in virtuality there is a barrier and discussions are not made. Do not agree with my colleagues, with whom we do not share this point of view.

Aristides: [1] In Chapter VIII, what he analyzes are legal forms, the regulation of the working day: that in a first stage capital struggles to extend the working day and at another time there is the struggle of the working class to put a limit on it, and there is the question of how it is reflected in the parliamentary debates in England. etc. But let's say, I know that the form... For example, if one talks about revolutionary, political processes that we had to live (more or less) in Argentina or Latin America... I don't know how to put it so that it doesn't end up being something external to what we are seeing in the chapter, but there are debates where the working class politically discusses issues that go beyond the extension of the working day, even legal issues. I ask, because I don't know if it's a matter of something that hasn't yet appeared but is going to appear. But since we are talking about class struggle, I cannot help but see this contrast between these legal forms, which are an expression of this class struggle, but I am left with that feeling that there is something else that enters into the class struggle that would not be contemplated here.

[2] And another question is that of method with respect to this chapter, because it makes a history of the dispute over the extension of the working day. At some point in chapter II I had made a return to what the origin of gold was, because it had to be answered, and the historical method was coined to answer a very specific question and from there we returned to the development of the determinations, but in this case it was a bit like this... The question is whether, when the working class is confronted with this question, it has to be answered by looking at what this history of the shaping of the working day was. Because at the end of the chapter Marx says that what was an exchange between equals in appearance, ends up being... Well, it is evident that the worker does not have that freedom. It is this that in certain deployments a form appears and later a contradictory appearance but that has to do with how that is moving and with the form of the method.

JIC: [1] In what appears in the chapter on the working day and in what we look at development from the point of view of the contradictory necessity of capital to have surplus labor power and at the same time sell itself for its V... We made this differentiation between private and public (political) legal relations. When one

[146] The CICP.

speaks of classes, it is a political relation, like the state (political representative of the total capital of society). What we have seen so far is political relations, but only to the point where we have advanced. Up to this point, the class struggle is a necessary form of capital, so that the labor force reproduces itself in conditions that serve capital, either by the limitation of the working day or by the coverage of unemployment, let's say, are expressions of this. The class struggle will always be a form of the movement of capital. What one can say in some way is that one would like to see something else for the class struggle, that goes beyond this, and yet there will always be this, but let's see what happens to this.

[2] The second question had several aspects. We arrived at those same forms and we were able to deploy them more without looking at the concrete forms. We said: "this is a process of historical development", but we did not stop to look at the history of the trade union movement, of the relationship of citizenship, or of the state. And we unfold the organicity of the relationship. If one looks against the chapter that Marx makes, the organicity of the relationship is not there. What's more, at some point it is going to put something like "concessions that are taken from it", and they are not concessions, it is the way in which the unity between social production and consumption is established. Capital does not concede anything, only seen externally can it be seen that way. The state, whether "welfare" or not, is the exploiter of the working class.

I understand that one can advance more if one accompanies the unfolding of necessity, of determination, than if one looks at the concrete forms and sees that this and that appears there. Especially in the discussions that say that Marx in *Capital* did not develop social classes and class struggle, because of the last section of Volume 3 where the writing is interrupted. And when you look at it like this, you say: everything that follows from here has the concrete form of the class struggle, the working class is the bearer of this, the capitalist class is present in all development, it is better that *Capital* is about the class struggle because it is the concrete form with which the accumulation of capital moves. Why did Marx put it that way? One would have to ask Marx. There are some of his biographers who say that since Marx had many things written about these concrete forms, he was sorry not to publish them and that is why he did it. Maybe it was like that or maybe it's nonsense, but we'll never have that answer.

It is clear that there is a very great contrast between the previous chapters and this one [Chapter VIII] because of the form. Why that form? When this form appeared, it was very stimulating for me to ask myself why and the unity between the base and the superstructure, in contrast to the prologue to the *Contribution*. For me it is not the best form of exposition, but I claim that it helped me a lot, perhaps if it had been more fluid I would not have stopped so critically.

[Alejandro comments that he found chapter VIII very stimulating because he has suffered the effects of night work, etc. JIC replies that we should always think about it that way, in current terms].

Pedro: It is clear that there is a methodological issue in the base and the superstructure. The conventional logical method puts them as if asserting

themselves and then needs a logical relationship to connect them. The different interpretations of Marxism start from the same method and seek to relate them, and from there relative autonomy appears, etc. It is clear that the method is important. But my doubt here is that I cannot see the method springing from a necessity of capital, but that it appears to me springing externally as a method with which to understand this.

JIC: Do you say because of the way it is exhibited in *El Capital*, or because of the way we display it?

Pedro: From the way we've deployed it, I think.

JIC: How we unfold it was that we looked at the content of the relation, of capital as a subject; we looked at the concrete forms that it takes in its movement in the unity of the material process of production and valorization, and we arrived at the same thing that Marx arrives at in Chapter II when he says that commodities must be brought into circulation and we have to look at legal relations. the form that the exercise of this social relation takes in circulation.

That is what we accompanied: we were looking at how the very form that this social relationship has—we had looked at the antagonistic character that springs from the content of the relationship—confronted us with a need for that content, which is that there should always be labor power available. We looked at this autonomously regulated content and we said: autonomously this cannot be realized, it has to take a form that even appears through affirmation *through the very negation* of the simplest relation, which is competition, and we have to look then at the form that the realization of this contradictory need for the total capital of society is taking. And we came to classes and class struggle and we said: this is the form that this contradictory necessity takes. But this form, because of its openly antagonistic character, in turn has to be the content of another way in which that antagonistic character appears erased because it expresses the unity of the process of social metabolism, and we look at the relationship of citizenship. And we said: but here, since the total capital of society is the expression of the unity of the movement of social life, it does not appear to have an existence of its own. And then we said: what juridical, political form does the total capital of society take immediately as such? The state.

That's when we deployed the determinations. In *Capital* is exposed in an external way: we look at this, this and this, and here the class struggle appeared. But the way we have been developing it, I understand that we did not take a leap to exteriority.

Pedro: I understand the path that is being followed. It is a doubt of mine because when it speaks in a certain way and deploys certain content, it seems that there is a previous method before facing the content that I am developing, or is it that the same content brings me closer to the method by which I am advancing, hence my confusion.

JIC: Why do I raise it at this point? We have been exercising the method throughout everything we have been seeing, what we have been unfolding is: here there is a content that has this form, which in turn acts as a content that fulfills its need under this form, which in turn... So he was not put on the outside. Precisely, what Aristides pointed out... The answer to why what he wants to be present, up to here cannot be present, is because what we have deployed so far does not show us that it has that power that he wants it to have.

I could put it in these terms: since everything that exists is an actual existence that has a power to realize, and everything that is born, the power that it has to realize apart from the reproduction of its life is its death, then the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production is already explained because it is historical. it was born, and it necessarily carries within it the necessity of its own annihilation. But that's what I absolutely refuse to do.

Once it's unfolded, what we have in front of us is this, but we didn't get to this point because we expected it to have a different form than the content. What we went to do was to look at – let's go to the simplest way – that it is a social relationship, between people. What shape does it have? That of no relationship between people. We unfold this content, and as we accompany it in its movement we find this. We do not state that it has to have a power to be realized and that we are going to go looking for it. What we have been doing is describing something that we have in front of us, saying what form it has, and we have found that effectively every current existence at the same time has a power to realize. We all carry in our being the temporal determination, which immediately says that we are a current existence that has a power to realize. At this point it is quite present. But we are never saying: because *it has* to have a way to be realized, we are going to go and find it. When we look at it we say: this has to have a shape, what is it?

I would like to start again with this: what we have so far and why we are going to continue, why we cannot stop here, why our object pushes us to move forward. Because if we stopped here, we would turn it into an abstraction. If we look at what we got to this point... First I'm going to take it externally: if we look at capital up to this point, we can say that it is a subject, that's what we saw in the deployment, it does the same as living subjects (redundant: you can't be a subject if you are not alive): it spends its body to appropriate the environment in which it is, it is transformed from that appropriation, and the purpose of this movement is to produce itself with greater and greater power in order to reproduce itself, on an enlarged scale.

But if at the same time we look at capital up to this point, we can say externally that it is a "tricky" subject, which is pitiful, that it is not capable of setting its own conditions: the working day is given, the value of labor power, the conditions of production, etc. are given. He seems to be a very limited subject. But if we look further up to the point where we get here, we look at all the concrete forms that exist in the capitalist mode of production as forms of capital. And what powers does this subject have? Up to this point it can only multiply its powers *extensively*, and consequently it can only reproduce itself identical to itself but larger and

larger, and then it returns to being a tricky subject. If we looked at the movement, its purpose is to produce surplus value. And the most powerful way to produce it is not simply to spread: it is to do it *intensively*, increasing the rate of surplus value.

And so what we are facing from now on is what Marx is going to call *relative surplus value*, because it is, in the conditions we have up to now (the given working day, the value of the given labor power, what is a worker who serves capital is given...), how to increase the intensity with which capital produces itself. And so the question that arises is the production of relative surplus value. If the working day is given, in order to increase the rate of surplus value (and up to this point the labor power is paid for its value), the only possible way is to begin to transform one of these things that are given, and it will be transformed... and Marx has already stated it before when one looks at variable capital and surplus value, the independent variable is the value of labor power and surplus value is the residue left by surplus labor. So, if the determinant of the intensity with which capital is valued is expressed in the rate of surplus value, the way to operate on the rate of surplus value is to decrease the value of labor power, not to pay it below value. How can it be reduced? By making commodities whose use-value is necessary for the reproduction of the worker have less value. How? By increasing the productivity of labor that produces the "basket" of consumption of *commodity* use values of the working family. With the given working day, a greater part of the working day is freed up in which the worker goes to work for free for capital. So, it will appear in this determination of the production of relative surplus value.

I forgot to raise one thing before, I go back. Look at what Marx immediately says about the character of the capitalist mode of production in the chapter that follows—because I don't know if we're going to be able to see it today. What comes before, at the end of Chapter IX, from the point of view of Volume 1... We will see that at other times Marx is going to refer to this situation, but it is going to appear as a question... At one time the discussion within Marxist political economy revolved around this question that is going to appear here, and that today Marx continues to be imputed, and the one who makes the most empty, most grotesque critique, the Austrians claim it, and that here Marx is going to ask why this is a question that at this point cannot be deployed and he is only going to unfold it in Volume 3. Not to make this a kind of esoteric thing: it is what will be known as the question of the transformation of values into prices of production, which for everyone, inside and outside Marxism, has become the problem of transformation (I advance that there is no problem).

To put it in context (Marx is going to make a reference to classical economics but he is not going to make the deployment, but I am going to raise it), when Marx arrives here with development, it is clear that commodities, at this point, are known in the production process as products of capital: they are no longer simply products of labor but of labor alienated in capital. But we never see them in circulation as products of capital, we only know them in production as products of labor. As such, commodities are exchanged in proportion to the quantities of socially necessary abstract labor embodied in them. But if we look at this from the point of view of capital, we have already seen that there is an organic expression of the valorization of capital which is the rate of surplus value (only variable capital is

capable of producing it), but there is a formal expression of the capacity of valorization of capital which is the *rate of profit*.

What Marx is going to observe is that at the same rate of surplus value—the degree of exploitation of labor power—commodities are exchanged in proportion to the total amount of labor they contain, and this quantity is linked to the share of variable capital that each capital has, and that capital has different proportions of variable capital within it. And that then those capitals that have a larger proportion of variable capital within their total, at the same rate of surplus value, generate a larger mass of surplus value. Therefore, the rates of profit between capitals with different proportions of variable capital, even if the rate of surplus value is the same, are not equal. The observation you are going to make is that we know this so far. And he says: but what we know is kicked by concrete practical experience, because everyone knows that the composition of the capital of the different capitalists does not matter: the rate, the proportion of profit that is obtained, is exactly the same.

So far it is the vulgar conscience. He says that to resolve this apparent contradiction we still need many links. Classical economics, which has not been able to explain why there is a general, common rate of profit, nevertheless realizes that this is linked to value, which for it is determined by the quantity of labor. And in the face of this, he tries to solve it by making violent abstractions. And he is going to make the reference to Ricardo's school.

In chapter I of Ricardo, where he explains value (not different from exchange value) by the quantity of work, and says that it depends on aspects such as the complexity of work, present and past work... Suddenly he realizes that because of the composition of the different capitals (which he is not going to call variable and constant, but circulating — the wage — and fixed), at equal quantities of labor, the prices at which commodities are exchanged are not equal, that what there is is a general rate of profit. That's why he says Ricardo's school stumbles over that and continues to do so all the time. Ricardo resolves this by saying that value is determined by the quantity of labour, but is modified by the composition of capital. Marx goes on to make this observation about vulgar economics that it is incapable of learning anything, clings to appearance against the law that governs the phenomenon and believes, unlike Spinoza, that ignorance is a sufficient reason.

Why did Marx put this clarification here? He has clarified that he knows why, but so far he cannot present it. When Marx sent the drafts of Volume 1 to Engels, with the question of value, its form of value and this question, Engels sent him some remarks in a letter saying: get ready because they are going to jump on your neck telling you that commodities are not exchanged in proportion to the quantities of labour. And Marx replies (I try to put it from memory) that this is inevitable, and that if he wanted to answer these objections, he would have to destroy his dialectical method, and that this is not a defect of the method, but a virtue, because it makes the individual (he puts a term in German that is difficult to translate, because it has to do with "bourgeois", but it is not the same)... to the one who is a "square", a vulgar economist, has the virtue that makes him manifest himself inopportunely.

One of the things that happens in this regard is that after Volume 3 After Marx's Life is published, which was written before Volume 1, the Austrian who criticizes the determination of prices of production by value, says that Marx developed Volume 1 and that when he got to Volume 3 he found something that he did not know. He could answer and then he answered anything. So, despite the fact that the answer has already been published, ordinary economists continue to put themselves in evidence on this question.

Here there is a question of method that one cannot advance what one has not yet deployed. And if the criticism arises that it is evident that commodities are not exchanged in proportion to the quantities of labour they contain, but in a proportion from which springs a common rate of profit for the capitals of the different branches of production; So, you have to keep going until you face the determinations that allow you to deploy that. That is why for me both the letter and this one that comes here have been very effective for me as a criterion for the development of the workshops: not to answer in advance what is not yet present the possibility of deploying.

One last thing I have remembered with regard to Aristides' remark. Here it appears that the worker is not a free individual, but a worker forced by capital, and the real content of the second of the four appearances of circulation. But here it appears externally. We will see what happens if there is a possibility of developing a content, which is then no longer a problem of form, but arises from the very movement of the social relation, from the content of the determination of what a worker who sells labor power is. So far we have seen him externally: he is a free individual separated from his means of production. Let's see where all this development is going.

Next time we start with relative surplus value, and we are going to see another methodological question that appears where Marx "violates" something that he himself says he is going to do in Volume 1, but that he has already done before as well: to leave production and look at circulation, but not to answer what is here but to be able to explain how it is that in a mode of production where regulation is autonomous, for there to be Pr, the productivity of labor must increase in the generality of the branches that produce means of subsistence for the workers. Because if it increases in one and the others remain the same, the effect will be negligible. And to renew the Pr, that has to be a continuous movement. So, how in an autonomous regulation, that content takes a completely different form from that content. And what does this form put us in front of with respect to the capitalist mode of production? Marx says: we look at it, and then we forget that form, which will not appear until Volume 3.

§4. THE PRODUCTION OF RELATIVE SURPLUS-VALUE

Chapter X. Concept of relative surplus value.

We know capital as the concrete subject of its own process of valorization, of the process of social life in the capitalist mode of production, but at the same time we found, with what we had up to now, that it did not set its own conditions, but that they were given externally to its own movement. But above all we had that what is proper to the subject is to spend himself to reproduce himself, expanding his capacity for existence, and until now we only knew capital to expand a capacity of an extensive nature: there is a given rate of surplus value, and when each cyclical movement of valorization takes place there is a certain amount of surplus value that can be converted into new capital on the same basis, with the same capacity to produce surplus value that it had before. What this puts us in front of us is that, as a subject, capital is not only going to have an extensive capacity to multiply, but it is also going to have an intensive capacity. Intensity from the point of view of capital is the multiplication of the rate of surplus value: instead of having a rate of surplus value that always reproduces itself identically, the key to multiplying the capacity of capital to valorize itself is to increase its rate of surplus value, and not once, but to reproduce that increase continuously.

How can capital multiply its rate of surplus value continuously? Because up to this point we have been seeing that labor power is sold for its value, because it is clear that it can be increased by paying it below its value. How do you pay for it for its value? If he lengthened the working day by paying the worker the same, it would imply paying him equally below value, he will no longer be able to reproduce under normal conditions because he spends more labor power at his disposal the same mass of use values as before. The answer that will appear is: by decreasing the value of labor power. How? By diminishing the value of the commodities that the working family needs to buy in order to have labor power. How do you decrease it? By increasing the productivity of the labor that *directly or indirectly* produces those livelihoods.

Either it directly produces the means of subsistence, and consequently diminishes the quantity of living labour immediately materialized in them, or it produces them indirectly, that is, by producing means of production which enter into the production of means of subsistence and which, as a part of constant capital, will transfer their value to the value of the product. If the value of these means of production decreases because the productivity of the labor that produces them increased, the value of the means of life that were produced with them will decrease. The question here is the necessity of capital to continually increase the productivity of labor not in a limited sphere or circumstantially, but in the universe of spheres which directly or indirectly produces means of subsistence for the workers, and this in a continuous process.

What does this determination put us in front of? Up to this point we looked at the capitalist mode of production and said that what we have in front of us was its simple reproduction, that the class struggle is the way in which labor power is sold for its value, and there is nothing that says that the very movement of the capitalist mode of production can affect its base. its reason for existing. Now we find that the capitalist mode of production carries with it, makes its essence, the continuous revolutionization of the material conditions of production. And if we said that consciousness and will is the form in which each member of society governs his individual action as an organ of the process of social life, and work is a conscious and voluntary action, if the materiality of work is continually revolutionized, the consciousness and will of individuals is continually revolutionized, it revolutionizes what is a worker and what is a capitalist. And now, from having been looking at a mode of production that all it could do was multiply identical to itself, we have a mode of production that revolutionizes itself continuously. And that this is an attribute that is only proper to the capitalist mode of production, due to the fact that the general social relation has an objectified form, it is carried in the product of labor.

In previous modes of production we had seen that social relations were direct relations between people, and consequently, the immediate purpose of social production could not be supported by the multiplication of production itself. And here (and even more so that we saw that the link that organizes the production of social life is not simply the production of value, but of surplus value), what we are going to find is that for this reason, that the immediate purpose with which social labor is set in motion is to multiply the capacity to set social labor in motion, Even at the expense of the process of human life considered as a merely natural process, what we have before us is a specific historical power for the development of the productive forces of social labor. And what we see is that the properly human way to advance in the capacity to appropriate the environment is the development of those productive forces. So, from the previous chapter to this one, what this general social relationship is radically changed [...].

What Marx is going to pose next is a question that plays a central role with respect to method. He is going to state that we are interested in looking at what happens to this continuous increase in the productivity of labor that produces the means of subsistence for the workers and therefore engenders the continuous increase in the rate of surplus value. We are going to look at it as if this were the immediate goal, but in reality, in this mode of production where there is no direct regulation of the unity of this movement (although this results from the unity of the movement), it is necessary to explain how it is that all the capitalists, who are agents of this development of the productivity of labor, they are bearers of the need to carry out this development. So, here we have to separate the content of the movement from the form in which this movement is imposed.

And the form is competition, and the content of the movement does not present itself to the consciousness of the immediate subject who carries the necessity of that content (the individual capitalist) for what it is, but is presented to it as an immediate question which makes the movement of his individual capital and which has nothing to do with the general result of which his individual action is to

be an individual organ bearer of that general result. And so what he is going to say is: in order to make this difference clear, but only to make it clear, it is necessary to stop at the concrete way in which the general need of individual capitalists to increase the productivity of the labor of their own workers is going to operate. If a shoe-producing capitalist increases this productivity, he manages to make his s 's cheaper, but these are a little piece of the workers' consumption basket, and therefore it cannot be presented to him as an objective that if he increases the productivity of labor the result will be cheaper for the labor force as a whole. Then the concrete form that presents itself to the consciousness of the capitalist will appear: the need to increase the labor capacity of his workers, even if he has no idea that the result will be the increase in the rate of surplus value for all capitalists.

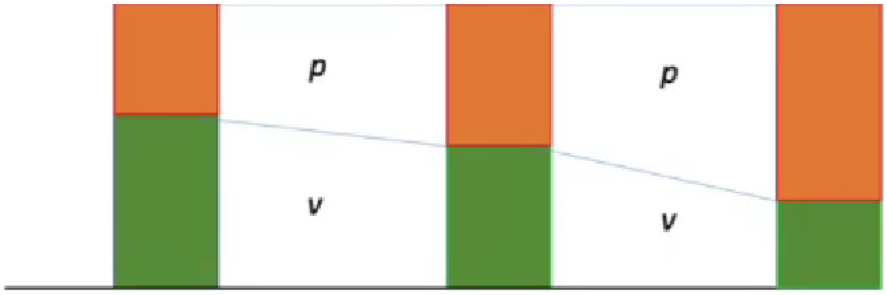
I can accompany the development with a graphic example that serves to see the movement:

Forms of surplus value

a) Absolute, extraordinary and relative surplus value.
b) Simple cooperation, manufacturing division of labor, machinery system.
c) Capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery.

And I am going to separate the *substance* from the relative surplus value, the content, from the *form*.

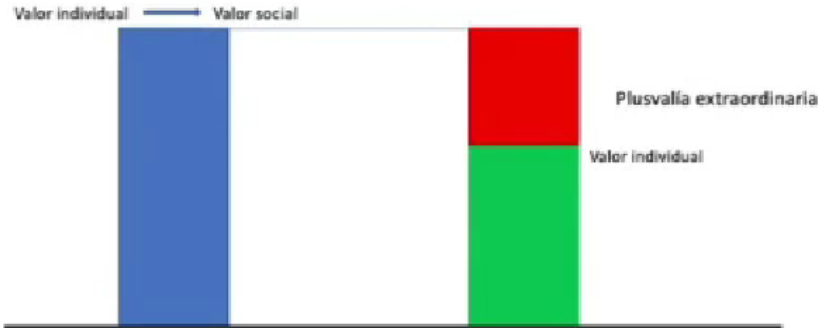
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If, given the working day, the value of labour-power decreases, the result is that the labourers have to perform less and less labour necessary to replace the variable capital, and consequently a greater quantity of surplus labour is released. Here the "independent variable," so to speak, is the value of labor power: surplus value is a residue, given the working day, it is the surplus product that is obtained with respect to necessary labor. The surplus-product by itself cannot increase given the working day, except by the reduction of the necessary labour-time. This is the content that is at stake. But now what we're going to look at is the way this content is developed.

So, we are no longer looking at the movement that is going to result, but the starting point of that movement. And what we have is a commodity whose value is determined by a certain amount of socially necessary abstract labor that was expended in producing it and which is expressed with a magnitude of value. This is a capitalist within a branch of social production, where there are other capitalists who produce this same commodity. Each of them uses a production technique that is somewhat more or less productive than the others. We have already seen that the determination of value in its simplest expression corresponds to the average condition. And at that average condition, the term social value is now going to appear in contrast to the term individual value.

Form of this content



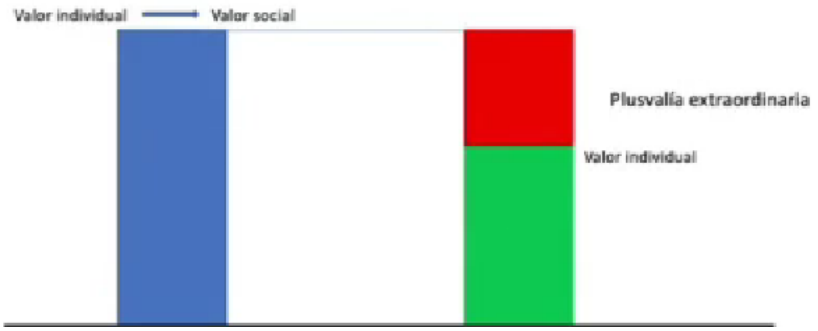
There is an individual who, if the productivity of the labor of his workers is higher than normal, will have his individual value below the social value, and another who will have a productivity below the weighted average of the branch, and will have his individual value above the social value. But for what we are going to look at, that circumstantial difference is irrelevant. Marx does not simply put it that way, but we will consider that they all have the same technique of production, and that the individual value of each of them is immediately equal to the social value. Because the problem we have here is no longer that of explaining normality, that in that normality, what we now know as social value, can only be imposed as an average. Now what we want to look at is how normality moves, how it moves from one normality to another (if we look at it externally). If we put in the starting normality differences between individual value and social value, we will be obscured to see what happens when a capitalist appears who deviates from what was the norm until that moment so much as to say that now this is going to tend to be the normal condition.

What does Marx propose that is going to happen to a capitalist who has incorporated a superior productive technique, so that the amount of abstract labor that is socially necessary—but not yet recognized simply as socially necessary—to produce a unit of commodity, is that which corresponds to the **green** [147]cane?? Now what we have is that the old technical condition is the one that corresponds to the individual value that determines the social value, and now an individual value has appeared. What leads the green capitalist to have increased the productive capacity of the labor of his workers?

[147] Chart bar above.

In circulation, in the process of competition, commodities were sold at social value, the **blue finite line above**. So this individual capitalist is going to find that if he comes into circulation with a commodity that qualitatively is exactly the same use-value as the one that was up to now, but which contains a smaller amount of abstract labor to which corresponds a lower individual value, if he can sell at social value, if he can sell at social value, Because it is what this commodity is sold to up to here, it will obtain an extraordinary surplus value, which comes from circulation: its workers worked the same as before, only with a greater productivity, and consequently in each unit of product there will be a smaller amount of abstract materialized labor. So, if that smaller quantity that corresponds to the individual value is going to be socially recognized in circulation as if it contained the amount of abstract labor that until now was socially necessary, and the individual capitalist who made the technical innovation is going to have an extraordinary surplus value. And this is his goal, motivation, as it presents itself to his consciousness of why he has to increase the productivity of the labor of his workers.

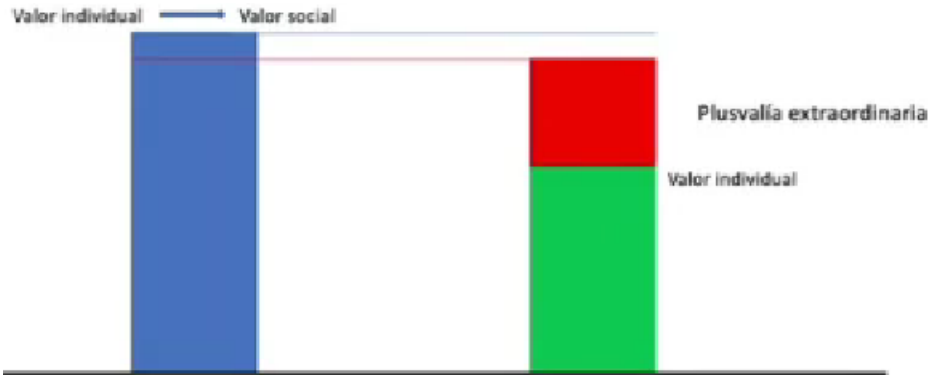
And now what we see is that this determination also extends to the capitalists who directly or indirectly produce means of subsistence not for the workers, but for the capitalists. The cheapening of these means of living has no effect on the rate of surplus value: simply with the same amount of value you will be able to buy a greater amount of use values. But from the point of view of the individual capitalist who produces these use-values, if he succeeds in making the productivity of the labor of his workers greater than normal, he will sell at a social value greater than his individual value and will have his surplus value extraordinary. This seemed to be a circumstance that reached only capitalists directly or indirectly linked to the production of means of subsistence for their workers, and is now a universal necessity. Having seen this first movement, we find the mechanism that will lead us to the content of the production of relative surplus value. And the first step will be taken by the following [Same scheme]:



The **capitalist on the right** increased the productivity of the labor of his workers, but the working day remains the same. And under these conditions it produced a greater quantity of this commodity than is produced with the old productive technique. To put it more simply: suppose that in the normal condition from which we start there are 10 capitalists who produced with the same technique, and each one produces 10 units → 100 units come into circulation. Let's assume that this is one of those 10 capitalists who changed the old technique for the new. There were 9 capitalists who produce 10 units each (90), and let's assume that the other capitalist doubled the productivity of his workers (in the graph there is less than a

doubling, but let's assume it), with which they produce 20 units, which added to the 90 of the other capitalists are 110 units that reach circulation. Consequently, in order for these 110 units to be absorbed, the size of the solvent social need for these commodities must grow. And for that to happen, what has to happen is that the price of these commodities has to decrease: they will only be able to be sold below the social value.

The capitalists using the old technique began to sell each unit at a price lower than its individual value, not appropriating the full surplus value produced by their workers. The capitalist who incorporated the new technique cannot have *all* the extraordinary surplus value that he could have achieved by selling the old social value, impossible because the mass of product increased, but he will have an extraordinary surplus value by selling below the social value but above the individual value.



This is the only thing that immediately presents itself to the individual capitalist: in competition, he knows that if the mass of commodities he is going to throw into circulation increases, he needs to lower the price. But if it manages to sell at a price that is below the social value but above the individual value, it makes sense to incorporate this more productive technique. What is going to happen? This individual capitalist, as he has more surplus value, has more capacity to accumulate and will be able to increase the scale of his production. Those who lose a part of their surplus value will try to counteract this by applying the new technique, which is beginning to become widespread. And the more it becomes generalized, the greater the mass of units of this commodity that come into circulation, and the more the solvent social need must grow, and for this the price must fall still further than the old social value.

[Aristides asks what the solvent social need consisted of.] What we saw in Chapter III is: when a commodity, in normality, has been produced in excess of the size of the social need solvent by it, which is the one that corresponds to the value of this commodity, the unity between production and social consumption is established through the fact that the surplus commodity is sold below the value. A part of the substance of value which is carried in that commodity in circulation becomes appropriated by the one who buys the commodity below the value, and vice versa if it is lacking. Up to this point, we started from normality, in which

commodities were sold for their value, so the size of the solvent social need would correspond to that value.

Now what happens is that a larger number of units come into circulation, and for it to be absorbed it has to meet a greater solvent social need. How does it get bigger? Selling below what was the social value. The more the size of the solvent social need that corresponded to the old social value, the mass of use-values that are arriving because the productivity of labor is increasing, exceeds what was the size of the solvent social need, the more the solvent social need has to grow, and the more the price has to fall. That is the mechanism by which the solvent social need grows.

I am going to add one thing that is not in Marx. Marx makes an observation in the text that requires some consideration. I don't remember if it's in this chapter because I don't have it written down here, but I'm going to take it because it's given rise to a series of discussions. [...][148].

Alejandro [Chat]: Does this determination appear in the consciousness of the capitalist as the constant vigilance of cost reduction? Or is it not simply so?

JIC: For the capitalist it appears as an increasing cost, but he sees that at the same time he is increasing the productivity of his workers and with the same amount of work he produces more units. It is not that the capitalist aims to diminish the value of his commodities, but to obtain an extraordinary surplus value which he appropriates on the basis that in competition he can sell above individual value and below social value.

Alejandro [Chat]: Does talking about social value have a pedagogical character? It seems to me a tautology to speak in these terms because value is the amount of abstract socially necessary labor materialized in the commodity in a private and independent way. I understand that in the consciousness of the capitalist there appears this confrontation of the product of his individual capital against the mass of commodities of the totality of the capitals of society, but the value of his product is never simply individual.

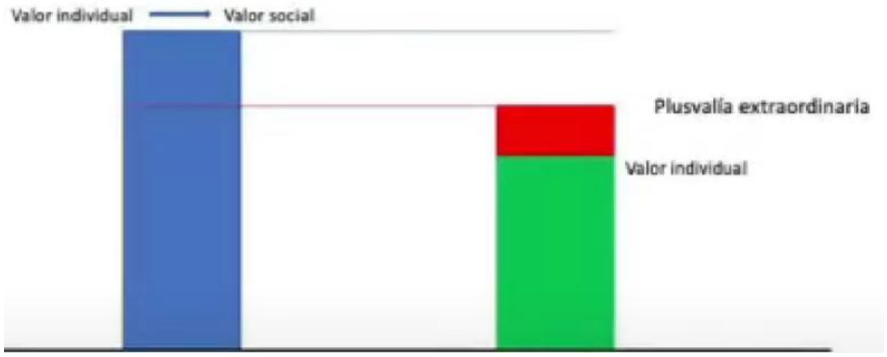
JIC: As we advance on the concrete forms, the need for this differentiation appears. When we set out, in Chapter I, we could have differentiated between individual value and social value: the individual from the point of view of the individual conditions of this commodity producer, and of what normality is. If normality were what corresponds to this producer, then the value of this commodity must be so much.

Let us suppose that the time of SNALdPaI that it takes the producer A to produce a unit of his commodities is 10h, and is expressed as value in $10: from the point of view of this producer, the individual value is $10. And next to it there is another who spends 8 hours of work, and from his point of view it would be normal for him to be able to sell the commodity at $8: that is its individual value.

[148] He says that in the end he will leave it for later.

As if this were the general condition. So, it's not that abstractly you know how long it takes. When we talked about individual value, we said that if such were the normal, then this would be the value. But it is not normality, that is the circumstance of each individual: normality in this example is that on average it takes 9 hours of work, and consequently the commodity is going to be sold for $10. There is one who actually put in 10 hours of work and will only be recognized as if he had put in 9 hours, and he will have a title to the product of social labor only for a value that corresponds to 9 hours of SNALdPaI. And the other, who will have simply put in 8 hours, will benefit from receiving the product of what is considered to be a normal 9 hours.

Marx does not raise it so far because now difference has a significant role, not simply with respect to a normality, but with respect to how normality moves, how it is transformed. I will then dwell on the proposals that exist around this. But it is not a pedagogical problem, but one of the deployment of determination in its concrete forms, where what appeared as a simple, univocal determination (in the sense that differentiation between individual and social was not necessary), now needs to be differentiated.



I'm back to screen sharing. And what we had is that as the new technique becomes generalized, the price falls more and more below the [old] social value, it approaches the individual value that corresponds to that more productive technique, and consequently, the extraordinary surplus value falls. But if we look at what happens to the capitalists who did not incorporate the new technique, the valorization of their capital is increasingly affected, more strangled. And if at first one could say that they were losing part of their surplus value, now they may be losing even a part of their capital. And therefore, it is imposed on them as a necessity of competition, of life or death, to incorporate technical conditions that sustain greater productivity of labor. Then, the new technique continues to be generalized, until it reaches a point where it became the normal technique.



And now it is the individual value that corresponds to the new technique that determines the [new] social value. The blue line was the old social value, now what we have is the social value corresponding to the individual value of the new technique. The capitalists who did not incorporate it were displaced from production, and when the new technique became generalized, the extraordinary surplus value disappeared.

Now, this exhibition is doing as if it were a sequence, but what is the concrete movement? It is as if one was left in a static situation and the other also had a static situation when incorporating a new technique, but in reality, when the green capitalist increased the productivity of the labor of his workers on the basis of using a new technique, the blue capitalists do not need to incorporate that technique, but to incorporate an even more productive technique. because if the work of these workers is more productive, the individual value for them will be lower, so the extraordinary surplus value will be greater. Here it is placed as a sequence in which we start from one point and arrive at another, but the concrete development of determination is a continuous movement, where—I will put it this way—the point is *always to be* the one who makes the technical innovation, and then each individual capitalist through competition is forced, whether he wants to or not, to advance in the development of the productivity of the labor of his workers. because if not, it will be wiped off the map. And this is the way in which this necessity is presented to the individual capitalist. I'm going to complete the development and then come back to an issue. So far, what we have seen is the content of the determination of the increase in the productivity of labor, linked to the branches that directly or indirectly produce means of subsistence for the workers, and the way in which this necessity is carried in the consciousness and will of the capitalists. But now, let's look, so to speak, at the unity of these two movements:

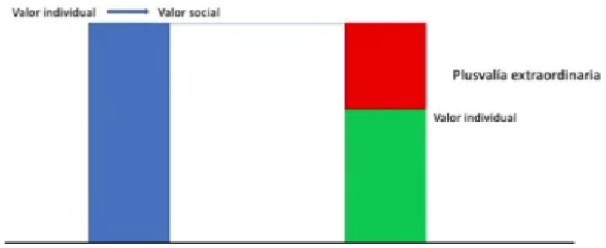


Let us suppose that a worker who is in any branch of production, in a day's work, produces this mass of value [Right column]. And let's assume that all he needs to buy in order to reproduce his labour-power is 1 unit of this commodity [left column], which requires this quantity of labour to produce it, which is represented as this quantity of value. Under these conditions, this [v] is the variable capital, the value of labour-power, and only this part of the working day is freed up for the production of surplus-value [p]. But what happens when we look at the situation with the new productive technique, and now the social value is determined by this individual value?



From the point of view of capital, only a smaller part of that day is necessary to reproduce labor power, and now a larger part is freed up for the production of surplus value. From the worker's point of view, nothing has changed: he continues to work the same hours as before. The worker still receives the full value of his labour-power, he is still able to buy the same quantity of use-values as before, but the value of his labour-power has decreased. So here we have the unity of this movement. Where did the extraordinary capital gain come from? Marx is going to propose two steps in this development.

It seems that the working day of this worker [**Fig. 1**]



It has the same division as this [**Fig. 2**]:



I would have to have another graph to express it more clearly, but I'll go back: if you look at this individual capitalist [**Fig. 1**], here is a part that is surplus value, which is the green part and corresponds to normal surplus value. If one looks at it, it seems that the worker of this capitalist, in addition to producing the normal surplus value, produces more surplus value, and then it seems that his labor is enhanced in the capacity to produce surplus value, and that the working day that corresponds to this capitalist has already changed the proportion between necessary labor and surplus value. But Marx goes on to say: when we come here [**Fig. 2**] what becomes clear is that surplus value does not spring from the saving of labour, but from the expenditure of labour. This extraordinary surplus value appropriated by the capitalist who makes the technical innovation is not a surplus value produced by his workers, because they continue to work exactly the same amount of time as before and the value of their labor power remains the same as before. This surplus value flows to this capitalist in circulation, but there is no surplus value generated (just as no value is generated). Where does this surplus value come from? This has a whole complexity of development.

One can look at it in the simplest manifestation, where the capitalist who obtains the extraordinary surplus value does not owe it to the fact that he made the technical innovation, but to the fact that the others did not do it. If everyone had done it, there is no extraordinary capital gain. So, it is not abstractly an enhanced labor because it now produces more surplus value by itself: it owes the extraordinary surplus value in part to this increase in productivity, but on the other hand to the fact that it did not increase that of the rest of the producers of that same commodity. So, it comes in part from the surplus value that the rest lost, it is a part that flowed to the one who is selling above his individual value. But it is not simply this movement: it depends on the general unity of social production and consumption, on what role this commodity plays in that general unity.

What is happening? That the **green capitalist** is selling his commodities at a higher price than their individual value [**Fig. 1**], and therefore the **capitalists who are paying for labor power because that commodity is sold at a higher price**, are depriving themselves of extracting surplus value from their workers [**Fig. 2**] at the expense of the latter You're getting more than you put into the production process. So, surplus value is flowing from other branches of social production into this one, because the consumption of this commodity has increased, and if there is a given total mass of value, the consumption of other commodities has decreased. And since there is plenty of other commodities, they will also have to be sold below the social value, *but* now this sale is simply at the expense of the surplus value of the capitalists whose workers produce these commodities. That surplus value that these capitalists lost by selling their commodities in any other branch below the social value because a part of the mass of value that flowed into that branch flowed into it, is part of the surplus value that will constitute the extraordinary surplus value of the capitalist who made the innovation.

[...][149] If a small fall in the price below the social value multiplies the solvent social need enormously, then it will have to flow... [...][150]. In any case, what I am proposing simply does where the mass of additional value comes from, who puts it in, because it may happen that [...] this commodity becomes cheaper because its production has multiplied, and that the total mass of value that has to flow into this branch is smaller than that which flowed before, and consequently part of the value that previously came to this branch to go to others is released. The compensation movement is complex.

What I developed is considered in several examples, but in any case what I can do later is pass the text to it. They are examples of alternatives in which the extraordinary surplus value appropriated by some immediately corresponds to the normal surplus value lost by the others, the case in which more value has to flow in from outside the branch, and the case in which a part of the surplus value is released to go to another branch. I would have to advertise my book on land rent and say buy it, but I cut out the piece and upload it here or send it to the WhatsApp group.

[Responding to Aristides] As the new technique becomes more generalized, the possibility of appropriating extraordinary surplus value will be reduced, because more and more the price tends to the social value determined by the new individual value, [...] and the extraordinary surplus value disappears, until in normality it disappeared, and it is the movement from one normality to another normality. Looked at as if it were a separate movement in order to be able to analyze it: in real movement it is continuous, so the problem of the individual capitalist is not to imitate the other but to overcome him with the new technique.

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[149] After correcting himself.

[150] It is difficult for him to remember and he goes to look at it written. He mentions that it is something important for the discussion on the source of differential rent.

Iván: Here begins to appear (not in development, but in reference to what you are exposing) the need for capital to constitute a world market, to increase the scale of the market in which it places its commodities and develops its competition.

JIC: Yes, it is a problem from the point of view of the individual capitalist, who needs to find a wider market. Here what appears is: they are killing each other. And indeed, competition is the carrier of expansion, of the formation of a market that needs, if there is any... The private character is going to have different manifestations. One of the ones we saw was the national cuts. Well, the size of the domestic market puts a barrier on capital that needs to multiply the productivity of the labor of its workers, and consequently, it needs to pass over that national space. So, in effect, the capitalist mode of production, because it has an impersonal social relation, which therefore has no limit set by personal attributes, and that this impersonal social bond moves in response to the need to multiply itself, its scope is necessarily worldwide. The unity of your movement is a world unity.

Then—something that we are not going to see here—what appears is that because of the private nature of labor, even that world market appears fragmented into national markets where competition is mediated, it takes concrete form through the direct regulation of national states. That goes for another time, but effectively, capital cannot stop in its expansion, and that expansion takes shape in the expansion of the market in general. But it is also a need to expand your own market, it is not simply that the markets grow.

Alejandro: What Ivan mentions was present in chapter IV in some way, when he mentions that the starting capital has no formal limit to this expansion, although the world market has not been made explicit until now.

JIC: Now it has one more determination: up to that point it was simply to expand. Here is the concrete way in which it is the bearer of *the greatest power* to expand. The proper form of capital is not simply that it produced surplus value, then it became larger and produces more surplus value on the same technical basis that it had before, but that it revolutionizes its technical basis constantly, so it has *an intensive* limit, and that it has to transform (that is, to advance) *all the other forms of capital that it has to transform (that is, to advance) all* the forms of surplus value. the conditions in conditions for their multiplication. Because up to that point it has certain powers and reproduces them identical to themselves but more extended: now what it does is change its power all the time, and then now it has — I'm going to misuse Hegelian terminology because it's not even like that — but if before *formally* it tended towards universality, now *it really* tends towards universality, because it needs to revolutionize every material condition of production as a universal necessity. And now it is indeed expressed in what concrete form this potentiality has.

Let's go to one last observation that Marx is going to make about this, which is that the capitalist mode of production has this need to revolutionize working conditions not to lighten the workload of the workers, far from it. Its purpose is not to shorten the working day, but to multiply surplus value: only to shorten the part of the paid working day that the worker performs and to extend the unpaid part.

Later, when we advance, we will see how circumstances arise from this very fact of the need to shorten the working day in order to multiply the production of relative surplus value. But this shortening of the working day, the improvement of the worker's condition, is not the aim of the incorporation of technical innovations.

The last thing I want to say about this by way of synthesis is that we had social capital as the subject of the process of production of surplus value, in which individual capitals were the organs. When we looked at the class struggle and so on, we had come to this. Now we have gone a step further, because now the capacity of each capital in each branch to valorize itself depends on what the capitals of the other branches do, in so far as they produce means of subsistence for the workers. So now the unity of the movement of the total capital of society no longer appears, as we had before looking at relative surplus value, as a circumstance that is, so to speak... They have unity through the antagonistic relationship with the workers, and the relationship of solidarity of the capitalists is born of their competition. Now what we have is that the movement of the capitalist class does not spring up abstractly in circulation as a relation of solidarity. The unity of the capitalist class springs from the process of production because the valorization of the capital of each one depends on what the others do – so far with this restriction, they are the ones who directly or indirectly produce means of subsistence for the workers. So, we are advancing in the determination of the total capital of society as the concrete subject of this way of organizing human life.

We are going to start looking at what are the concrete ways to increase the productivity of labor. From what work, what is the work that we know so far? To move forward in this sense, I am going to move away from an aspect of development that Marx makes in *Capital*, because it seems to me... Like when we look at unproductive labor, and now we're going to go back to unproductive labor (work for circulation)... The development is going to confront us with a series of concrete determinations that, in part, Marx is going to develop in Volume 3, in part he is not going to develop them, but that make the unity of the movement. But it is also a synthesis of what we have developed so far.

What do we start from when we started in chapter I? We started with who it is that appeared as the subject of social production in the capitalist mode of production, and what we had was the producer of commodities, the production of simple commodities. What was the commodity producer? A free individual who has full control over his individual labor, private ownership over his means of production, but lacks all control over the social character of his labor: he cannot cooperate with others directly, he does not know whether what he produces is socially useful or useless (if it is, it is so in production, but he has no way of confirming it until he takes it into circulation). It is the fullness of social labor carried out privately and independently.

When we turn from this commodity producer to look at the function of money as capital, we find that the direct producer is now not merely a free individual, but doubly free: that the condition for being a commodity producer is not to have private ownership over the means of production, and that he no longer has full control over his individual labor. The productive attributes of a free individual are

demanded of him, but he does not decide what he is going to produce, how he is going to produce, etc., but this organization of his individual work is personified by the private owner of capital, of the means of production, who has ceased to be a direct producer. And in this movement what appeared was a first step in the socialization of private labor.

From the fullness of social labour carried out privately and independently, we find that within the capitalist mode of production, if there were no control of the social character of labour, there appeared as the first form of control over the social character of the labour of free individuals, the capacity of the capitalist to control the labour of the worker. One is free with respect to the other, and there is now a capacity to control the social character of labor. Outside this unit of production—individual capital—labor remains private: it is social labor, done for others in socially necessary abstract labor time, etc., which outwardly is privately organized, but inward, we have a first step in the socialization of that labor free individuals.

In order to express this (and this is why I am coming out of Marx's development) I use this schema with respect to the functions of the capitalist:



What does it mean to personify capital? It is, above all, organizing production. And Marx in immediate development is not going to focus on the capitalist in this function: he personifies capital and does not contribute anything to the production process, he became a non-producer. But then, in the unfolding development, there are some moments when it is necessary to organize the worker's work, and the material organization of that work is a condition of work for developing the materiality of this labor process. Consequently, in that sense, the capitalist does a part of the work. It is always placed on Marx very partially, but one has to recognize him in this condition. And I summarize this by saying: the capitalist [k] has to act as the productive consciousness [CP] of his capital within production: he is the one who organizes production, decides what, how and how much is produced. And this is a material condition to be able to produce.

If the capitalist participates in the production process effectively, then, since he is a necessary part of the social labor performed privately and independently, his socially necessary abstract labor is materialized in the commodity as part of its value. What the capitalist can never produce with his own labour is surplus value,

because it is on the condition that he has bought labour-power, the use-value of which is that it produces more value than it costs, and since the capitalist can never sell his own labour-power, he can produce the quantity of value which corresponds to the labour which he actually applies. whether for management or whether he is together with his worker working on the immediate materiality of the process, he can only produce value. From the point of view of their capital, their own labor is unproductive.

What needs to be done with the capital so that it can be put into operation once production has ended? Capital must be personified in circulation. This is the aspect that Marx excludes in Volume 1 absolutely, because he is not going to consider it except when he has to make this leap of looking at competition in circulation in order to explain the mechanism and then say: "What we are going to do is look at the content as if it were the immediate objective," and then movement is not going to appear in circulation. And here what we have is that this is work that does not produce value: it is simply transforming money into commodities and commodities into money. I schematize it as consciousness in circulation [CCi]. And finally, we have already seen that it has an antagonistic relation to the worker, it has to force him to hand over the greatest amount of use-value of his labour-power to capital. It has to make him work as hard as possible, and it has to coerce the worker. Coercion that acts as a relationship between free individuals, but that is effectively a condition for personifying capital to act as the coercive consciousness [CCo] of the worker.

When we continue to advance in the material forms of production of relative surplus value, we have to keep in mind that we are starting from *this* work now performed by this specific subject ["or"] is not a serf (we will see how it is done to increase the productivity of his labor), he is not a slave. It is in the productive attributes of this developed individual as the productive attributes of this individual, and as attributes of organization/personification of the commodity, and then of capital as this other individual ("k").

The first step in this deployment (I advance it so that you can move forward with the reading of that point) is, again: there are two ways to expand powers, extensively and intensively. What is the simplest way? Extensively. The first step, then, is to put the worker in isolation and extend him: let us put him together with other workers, to see what happens to that work which appeared simply individual to each worker when it acquires the material character of social labor, and consequently when we take a new step in the socialization of private labor. And this is what is going to appear in the chapter on cooperation. [...] Let us look at this chapter and see whether this extensive development of the social character of labour gives rise to an intensive development. And in that case what we are going to see is the division of labor and manufacturing.

[Productive/unproductive. Public/private]

We were going to start with the ways of increasing the productivity of labor, of a free and individual labor that is no longer simply that of the producer of commodities, but that of the worker who sells labor power, but we only know it in this condition of a "purely" individual labor such as that of the simple producer of commodities.

[...] We said: here appeared the determination of the capitalist mode of production as a revolutionary mode of production. It does not matter whether it is a question of capitalists who directly or indirectly produce means of subsistence for the workers, or who produce commodities for the individual consumption of other capitalists: all have as a condition of life or death to try to be at the forefront of the development of the productive capacity of the labor of their workers, this is imposed on them by competition. The content is: when it is directly or indirectly a question of the means of subsistence of the workers, the power of the capitalist mode of production to advance not only extensively but *intensively* in the development of the productive forces of social labour is expressed. The materiality of labor is continually revolutionized and in the same way the subjectivity of both the capitalist and the worker. [...][151].

In contrast to previous modes of production, where the immediate objective of production is simply to produce use values for human life through bonds of personal dependence, and here it is to multiply the capacity to set social labor in motion, and only if this multiplication is satisfied (if surplus value is produced) is it that use values for human life are produced. When we look at the material ways of increasing the productivity of labor, the modification in the technical conditions of production, we are going to be at the same time looking at what happens to the worker, what happens to the capitalist, as human subjects.

There is an issue that I was thinking of incorporating now, which is going to delay us a little at the start of the chapter on cooperation, but which seems important to me because of something that we have already talked about before. Marx only deals in Volume 1 with productive laborers, the workers of circulation will appear much later, in Volume 3, when we begin to talk about the forms that capital takes as capital that operates in circulation, as commercial capital. [...] We have already seen that in circulation a production of value can appear but carried in use-values that do not reproduce human beings, but are simply necessary for circulation, for the movement of commodities, the transformation of M-C/C-M. If we follow Marx's course, we shall see only a part of the workers doubly free, and at the same time we shall arrive at the historical character of the capitalist mode of production. This situation has given rise to a series of proposals regarding the role of traffic workers.

One of them is that since no new value springs from circulation, the workers in circulation are paid with surplus value and are allies of the capitalists because they participate in the appropriation of surplus value. Proposals have appeared that

[151] Connection cut.

they are not members of the working class, that only productive laborers are. And there is also the image that a worker is productive if he performs manual work. And when one looks at the concrete forms of the determinations of what a productive or unproductive laborer is, one encounters these problems. We look at it as simple producers of commodities, but now we have to look at it from the point of view of who is a productive laborer and who is a circulation worker, and who is an unproductive laborer of surplus value.

If I look at a worker who works in a bank, a bank worker, it is clear that he is a circulation worker: his function is to move money – not even to convert it into commodities – it is a process in which no use value is created from the point of view of the reproduction of human life. it is simply an expense incurred by capital because of the form that the capitalist mode of production itself has: the unity between production and social consumption is established a posteriori and separately from production, through circulation, and consequently it is necessary to perform work that simply serves for circulation. So, it seems clear that one can easily identify who is a productive laborer of surplus value and who is not. But when one looks at the statistical classification of a worker in the commercial sector, problems begin to appear, where this is not so clear.

I am going to give some examples (unfortunately they are separated by gender, so I am going to put it separated by gender in each case): the supermarket cashier is above all a traffic worker: her function is to convert commodities into money. But at the same time what it does is update the *stock* in the warehouses, etc. And that is the organization of a movement that is part of production. I should have clarified it earlier, but the physical transport of commodities is necessary for those commodities to have use value. The package of noodles that are in the manufacturer's warehouse, for me is not a commodity, I have no way of exchanging my money for that which is in the factory: it must be transported to a place where I can access it as a buyer. It is clear that the physical transport and preservation of the noodles in good condition is part of productive labor: it preserves the value of the noodles and the work that goes into those processes adds to their value. The storage work... Wheat at harvest time has a value, which is the labor that was expended in producing it at that time. After 6 months, as it had to be stored, and as a part was physically lost, because it is decomposing... [...][152] ... because they had to be manipulated, plus the value of the part that decreased, because it was inevitable that it would decrease, so the cost of storage is added.

But I return to the example of noodles: in the supermarket they are still not a use value for me, if I could not grab a bag of noodles from a pallet full of them... They are a use value effectively for me when they are put on the shelf[153]. Organizing the noodles to get to the shelf so that they can be available to me as a use value is part of productive labor. And for this it is necessary for the cashier to update the stock. Then, a form of wage labor appears in which it is no longer easy to distinguish, she does this as a productive laborer and this as an unproductive laborer. And if I go to the restocker[154] on the shelf, who are usually men, it seems

[152] Brief connection cut.
[153] Displays or shelves.
[154] Also "gondolier", or "repleniser".

to me that he is a productive laborer because he is the one who is in the warehouse, etc., but that same worker is the one who puts some band-aids with the price in front of the shelf, and there he is a traffic worker, he is not productive, that I know how much that costs me does not change the use value it has.

And now I'm going to go to the truck factory, to the automotive industry. And of course: trucks are used for transport, so he must be a productive laborer. But it turns out that a part of those trucks are trucks to transport flows, money. And when the worker is assembling the cash truck, he is not producing to produce human lives, but a means that is necessary for the circulation of money. So, that worker, *as soon as he produces that*, is unproductive. Now, to produce that, you have to use a sheet of steel, which has been produced by a metalworker... [...][155] ... that when it was producing it it was not productive either. And the miner who extracted the iron, the one who melted it, the one who made the necessary fuel... [...][156] ... The one who extracted the oil that ended up in the cash transport truck is unproductive. And in the example of the bank, the construction workers who build the bank building is a circulation expense.

So we have, in the first place, the problem of differentiating what is a productive laborer from an unproductive one. There are attempts to measure abstract forms in the general rate of profit, in what would correspond to the simplest determination of the general rate of profit, which try to separate this. So, they are clear that the workers of the bank are unproductive, and when they arrive at the store they do not know what to do. So they apply a 50%/50% criterion. And when they arrive in the automotive industry they are all productive, it does not matter that what they produce does not serve to reproduce a human subject in a more or less direct way. Until you get to a point where there are two works that take more or less the same period with different criteria of what goes in and what doesn't and end up reaching opposite conclusions, you see that there is a movement for one side and another for the other side.

As when we look at all these transformations, which affect the productive laborers and those of circulation, and in many cases it is more noticeable among the workers crudely of circulation than in the productive laborers (which are mixed with those of circulation), it is important to me, before we begin to look at the transformations, to make this clear and to see what difference there is between a productive laborer and one of circulation, if, just as one looks at it in the attempt to classify it, one cannot do so, if in the concrete practical movement these workers have differences beyond the determinations of their immediate consciousness, whether they are the same or whether they are different, and also to look at why the circulation workers are not productive of surplus value.

I propose that you look at some schemas where this appears, and one more question that concerns the condition of many of us who are present here and that is what happens to the education workers, whose concrete job is to operate in the process in which other members of the working class develop the intellectual (and

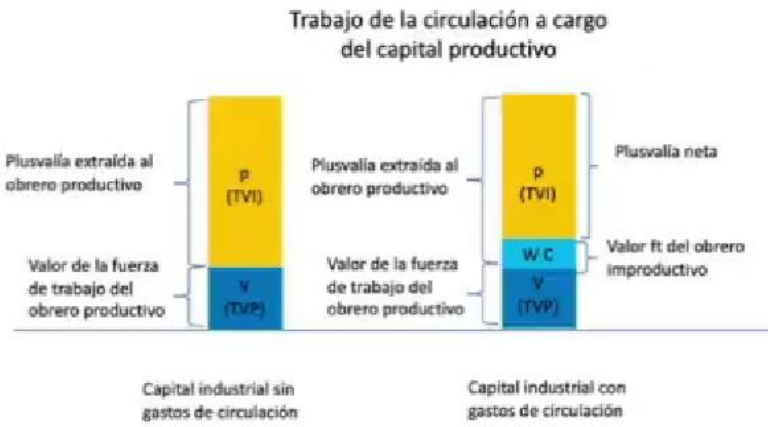
[155] 2-minute cut.
[156] Voluntarily cut off so that someone with connection issues can join the meeting.

manual) capacities that correspond to certain productive attributes. whether they are productive laborers, unproductive laborers or it is difficult to distinguish.

Source of circulation costs

Point of view	Produce
Simply Material	Usage Values
General material/social	Usage Values for Others
Commodities	Value
Capital	Capital gains

If one looks, from the material point of view it produces use values. They are social use values because they are use values for others, but they are not use values that serve to reproduce human lives: they are not means of life, nor means of production that serve to produce means of life. Therefore, if we look at it from the point of view of what is at stake in the production of commodities, it is whether they produce value, and from the point of view of capital it is whether it produces surplus value.


Trabajo de la circulación a cargo del capital productivo
Plusvalía extraída al obrero productivo
P (TVI)
Valor de la fuerza de trabajo del obrero productivo
V (TVP)
Plusvalía extraída al obrero productivo
P (TVI)
Plusvalía neta
Valor de la fuerza de trabajo del obrero productivo
W C
Valor ft del obrero improductivo
V (TVP)
Capital industrial sin gastos de circulación
Capital industrial con gastos de circulación

I did this quickly and it may be that I have quite a few deficiencies. On the left would be the purely productive: the productive laborer whose value of his **labor power** is the blue part, and "p" the **surplus value** that is extracted from him. Up to this point it is what Marx will later call "industrial capital" but with more complexity. I put it that way although it is not quite right, but it corresponds to the cycles of industrial capital without circulation expenses. The first step is to consider that he does have circulation expenses [right] but that he covers them by buying the labor power of **workers for circulation**. What happens to the value of the commodities produced by this productive laborer? Its use-value is not modified, nor is its value. Therefore, if the value of his labor power has to be paid to the unproductive laborer, the only source that the capitalist has to be able to pay it is by paying him with a part of the surplus value extracted from the productive laborer. This is the situation of the capitalist who has both productive and unproductive laborers, because he has to circulate his own capital.

[...] Here I had the traffic worker. Now let us suppose that he has to buy the commodity produced by a capitalist who only works for circulation. That capitalist has to pay his salary to the traffic worker. And let us suppose that, as the circulation worker works in his day, the same amount of time for himself as he works for the capitalist. Let us suppose that the commodity produced for circulation appears to have the same value as the common commodity, which is the product of productive laborers. So, when the industrial capitalist buys the services of circulation, the value of the commodity that he is going to have to buy is the wages of the workers in circulation + the surplus value that the capitalist is going to appropriate from circulation. It is the value that materialized in this use value that only serves for circulation. But *it seems* that then the circulation worker would have produced a quantity of surplus value. But with what does he pay for the commodity of circulation... [...][157]?

Let us consider that the value of the commodity of circulation... On the one hand, he has the wages of the circulation worker and the surplus value extracted from him by his capitalist. In that case, the industrial capitalist would have to pay the circulation capitalist the full value of the circulation commodity. The circulation capitalist would seem to receive a little bit of surplus value from his worker, but where did that little piece come from? From the surplus value that the industrialist had extracted from his worker. A part of the surplus value of the industrialist went to pay the wages of the worker, and on the other hand to pay what appeared to be the surplus value of the capitalist of circulation. The result is that there is only one surplus value: that produced by the capitalist who exploits the productive laborer.

Here I said: if the industrial capitalist had his own worker for circulation, he would only spend a little bit of the surplus value on circulation, and so it seems that if he buys a circulation service or a means that he is going to use in the circulation process, it is more expensive for him and he has to sacrifice more surplus value. The reality (and this appears in Volume 3) is that since the circulation capitalist is specialized in circulation, then it is more efficient than having a circulation worker a capitalist who is not specialized. And secondly, it combines the circulation of different industrial capitalists. The result is that, although he is appropriating a part of the surplus value of the industrial capitalist, buying the service of circulation may be cheaper for the industrial capitalist.

If we look at the unproductive laborer and the productive laborer, what we are going to have is that both are doubly free individuals who sell their labor power. The value of their labor power, let's assume that it is the same, that the intensity of labor is the same, and since there is a general working day, they have the same. And therefore, in the process of selling their labor power there is no difference that becomes apparent. The difference is in the way they are exploited. The productive is exploited because in the time of surplus labor it produces surplus value. The circulation worker is exploited because in the time of *surplus labour* (he also works beyond what corresponds to the value of his labour-power) he produces a surplus-product, although he does not take the form of surplus-value like the

[157] Cut in the recording.

productive one. He is as exploited as the productive laborer from the point of view of how much he works for himself and how much for the capitalist.

I emphasize all this because we have already seen the working class, and from the point of view of the antagonistic relationship with respect to the buyer of labor power, the relationship of competition to sell one's own labor power and the relationship of solidarity to sell it for its value, and therefore, the extension of that relationship of solidarity makes universality, to the constitution of the working class, they are indistinguishable. I wanted to emphasize this because we are going to put into play beyond what Marx proposes the transformations that both undergo. First we are going to make the exposition as Marx develops it, which only refers to what happens to the productive laborer. And when we have finished, we are going to go back through that development with things that are not in *Capital*, but that after 150 years of development of the capitalist mode of production, one cannot stop looking, considering that the objective is not to interpret the text, nor to know in the abstract what it says, but to answer one's own condition as a historical subject.

[Iván comments on how confusing it is to differentiate productive labor from unproductive labor, that there are companies that seem to do pure circulation work such as Mercadolibre but also do to bring commodities to the shelf, etc.]

JIC: From the point of view of the development of the content in its concrete forms that this general social relation takes, it is essential to differentiate a productive laborer from an unproductive one, it would be to turn it into an abstraction to ignore this difference. When one wants to separate them, there are some cases that are clear... I would be tougher with Mercadolibre, because it brings you closer to the window but does not bring you the product, and when it brings it to you, it charges you well for what it is doing. But in reality, to a large extent, what it is doing is operating purely in circulation (it could be argued, because it is very difficult to separate). So, from the concrete point of view, if one starts the other way around and says: I have these situations and I want to know if they are productive or unproductive laborers, there are cases in which it can appear very clear. Among productive laborers there is a problem: a large part of the commodities that are used as use values for human life are also used as use values simply for the process of circulation. If I look at a construction worker who is building houses, I say: he is productive because he is building use values for human life. I see that same worker building a bank and I say that it is unproductive, because there is no other activity there than moving money.

Iván: But there are also workers who do unproductive and unproductive labor, such as the bank executive who generates a check... Or you had given the example of the cashier.

JIC: Yes. The one who issues the money, the one who is giving a form of D-credit, is a promise to convert into money, it is not a use value for human life. When we started, gold appeared as money with a double role: it is a use value for human life, and at the same time as a representative of value it functions as a medium of

circulation (to take it simply). And there appears for the first time the problem of how to distinguish what is value-producing labor and what is not. At the time I put it this way: when Marx enters Volume 2, it appears very immediately that money-producing labor is unproductive, which is why it is a matter of replacing gold with signs of value, which take much less work than producing the gold that this sign of value represents. Marx's example is no longer used, but he says that gold can be used to fill teeth or to make a jewel that is not going to be kept in the safe but is going to be used, and in that case it satisfies people's needs. The gold that is produced to function as money does not satisfy any need of a person, it only serves for circulation.

Why do I always raise the need to look at productive and unproductive labor in Volume 1? The second reason is this that we're looking at now, to differentiate between productive and unproductive laborers, but the first reason is that when you look at the production of gold, if gold is only good for circulation, and the product of labor for circulation is not represented as value, then you get into the contradiction that gold serves as a measure of value because it's itself a value, but it turns out that if it is produced for circulation it would have no value. Last year, when we first entered circulation, I put forward the work of circulation, that the labor producing gold for circulation is represented by value. But what about that value?

When one looks at the reproduction of the life of society, that value is subtracted from what the producers of commodities that are not for circulation have to consume. When we look at the capitalist it is clear that what one appropriates as surplus value is actually what the other put as surplus value, and there is no new surplus value. In the case of when one is simply looking at value, it appears more diffuse, because it is: here there is a mass of value produced (it includes what was spent on producing the gold that is going to function as money), but then, in the process of human consumption, only a smaller mass of value enters. And that which was in the gold dedicated to circulation, was either preserved in the gold, or if, let's say that the gold was absolutely worn out and disappeared, it is a mass of value that vanished and there was no social wealth in values of use for human life that corresponded to that mass of value.

So, when one wonders about the difference between productive and unproductive laborers, it is very difficult. Therefore, when there are discussions about whether the rate of surplus value can be computed (the same for the rate of profit, but we did not see it until now) taking the distribution of income... That is not the rate of surplus value. In the first place, because in the mass of wages are the wages of circulation, which is in reality a part of the surplus value. So, this pseudo-rate of surplus value obtained with the distribution of income contains a much higher rate of surplus value, because it was doubly reduced: the *mass* of surplus value is reduced by having subtracted the costs of circulation, and the mass of wages is increased because it has the wages of circulation added together. And since the instruments that are used, the means of production that are used for circulation – tools, buildings, materials... – (which are not means of circulation, that is money), are subtracted from surplus value, they are also paid for with surplus value.

So, when one goes to the national accounts, for example, one finds that from surplus value are subtracted the wages of circulation and the expenses of circulation, which are paid with surplus value. So, what one obtains is not the rate of surplus value, it is not how the working day is divided. This working day is divided much more seriously from the point of view of the workers, they yield much more surplus-labour than would appear in this calculation. When you want to take the rate of profit on that basis, as we know it when we advance here [in its purity] (surplus value/advanced capital) the problem begins: from the advanced capital I have to take the wages out of circulation, how do I do it if I cannot identify who is and who is not a worker in circulation? From capital I have to get the circulation expenses that are "capitalized," and that is not part of the capital that I have to look at if I want to get the rate of profit in its purity. I can measure the concrete form, and I know that in that concrete form I cannot reconstruct the abstract form.

If I compute a pseudo-rate of surplus value from the national accounts, I have to know that this is not the rate of surplus value, and especially I have to know that it is much higher than what I am computing there, and that so is the rate of exploitation. When one comes to answer oneself about the content that is taking concrete form, precisely in order to be able to identify later that one cannot quantitatively reconstruct the content from the concrete form, one needs to distinguish clearly what a productive/unproductive laborer is. He will not be able to distinguish what was the magnitude of surplus value, of variable capital, etc.; it does explain why it will not be able to rebuild it and what the consequences of trying to rebuild it are. What one has to look at is the concrete form, what happens to the concrete rate of profit.

The movement of the rate of profit that corresponds to what Marx develops as the "law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall," is immeasurable from the data of the concrete statistical records. It is around this that there is the example of three economists: on the one hand Fred Moseley, and on the other Shaikh and Ahmet Tonak, who arrive at different results. To one (he does it for the United States, the period is not exactly the same) it gives that the "Marxist" or "Marx" (as they call it) rate of profit goes up, but that the concrete rate of profit goes down because of the circulation expenses. And for the others, the rate they call "Marxist" goes down. And when you look at the bases of the calculation, they are so rude... Moseley says: what do we do with the expenses of the commercial sector? 50%/50%: take the mid-1940s (this work if I am not wrong is from the late 1980s) and the commercial structure in the US from the mid-40s, to the end of the 80s changed absolutely. Was the employee of the old warehouse (which no longer exists, at least in Argentina) who was the one who delivered the commodity and was paid, more productive than the supermarket employee today? It is impossible to answer about that. It doesn't make sense. The problem is that, by not developing the determinations until they reach the concrete forms, then they want to make the leap from the concrete forms to the magnitude of those determinations that were not unfolding. So the measurements of the movement of the general rate of profit are not those of the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, they have a lot of mediations.

And second: it makes no sense to measure it. That is a law that is going to have a movement that is going to end up being reflected in the movement of the concrete rate of profit but with a lot of mediations, or it is a law that does not simply have that real movement. Although there are those who measure it with great joy, it is not... The one that is measured with concrete data is not the law of the downward trend, and the one that is intended to be measured according to the downward trend is a... Mamarracho[158], so to speak. Because, among other things, both Shaikh and Tonak and Mosley, put everything into the industrial sector as productive. And I say: in that sector are all those who make instruments that are later used for circulation. The condition of productive laborer does not depend on the materiality of the product, but on what need that materiality satisfies: whether it satisfies a need of a person or a need of personification.

The circulation worker is exploited, yields surplus labor and a surplus product. And its rate of exploitation, taken in general, is no different from that of the productive one. For if the value of labour-power and the length of the working day are the same, the rate of surplus-labour is the same. The difference is that one produces surplus value and the other simply yields surplus labour, but they are exploited by capital in two different forms, which when one goes to look at them in concrete movement end up being indistinguishable.

Pedro: I had a doubt about the future of capital in terms of productive labor, whether there is a tendency to increase productive or unproductive labor more. I see that as capital expands, more and more banks are needed, stock exchanges, *high-tech appears*, YouTube... Although I don't want to say that everything digital is unproductive, but there seems to be a trend in that direction.

JIC: Since it is very difficult to distinguish between productive and unproductive labor, I could not say if there is a movement to multiply the unproductive. Rather, I would say that it is a necessity of capital to do the other way around, because it exploits the unproductive laborer but does not produce surplus value, and the production of surplus value is the meaning of production in the capitalist mode of production. Saving capital in circulation does not increase the amount of surplus value but frees it up surplus value that it can allocate to accumulation. So, one sees that the saving of labor in both production and circulation, which would be the increase in the productivity of labor (a technical relationship) in production and circulation, capital needs to increase these two: one allows it to appropriate more surplus value and the other frees surplus value, both enhance accumulation.

Think, in this regard, of the savings in circulation costs that virtual banking means: instead of having a bank (which also for reasons of... These are capital representation expenses, and you need to have a building, etc.), a building, and a lot of ATMs, you have a shed... Here the rent of the land also plays out, that instead of being in the most expensive place of the movement of capital it is in a cheap place, it does not even have the shed, it may be that it has them distributed in a lot of sides to its labor power, beyond the fact that it has the option of paying the labor

[158] A doodle, a shabby and poorly done thing.

power below the value because it is not put together and cannot develop its relations of solidarity... But there's a huge economy in that.

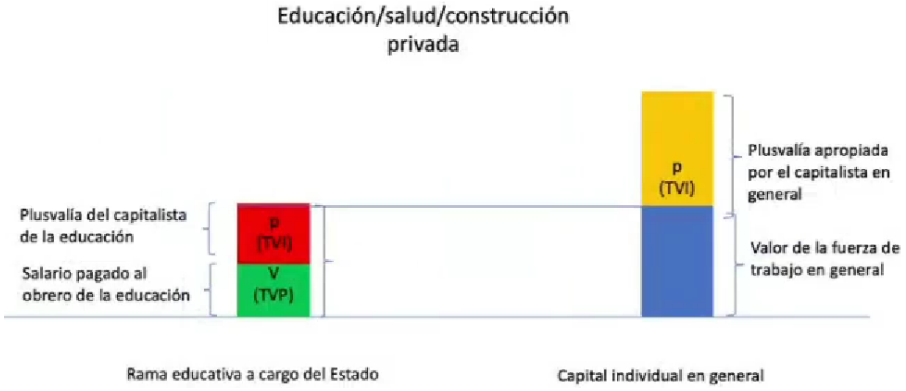
To make a financial transaction in Argentina, before in order for the buyer to pay the seller, he had to issue a check, which had to be printed on paper and had to physically reach the seller's hands. The seller would take that check and have to physically take it to the bank. The bank had to physically have a whole deployment of security personnel in the place, and to handle the boxes, it had to transfer those papers to an armored truck that took them to a place to make the bank clearing. Today all that is... There are very few living individuals mediating the process. So, it is a huge saving in circulation expenses. Then it is associated with other issues, the moment in which the accumulation of capital is occurring, we will see in Volume 3 but it goes beyond what is developed there. We are going to see a technical development, and a large part of this plays a central role in the costs of circulation, one sees it more in circulation than in production. And the example you gave is this, through the Internet, which has had a much more powerful effect on circulation than on production itself.

There is one more step that is never clear to me. I am going to put it as it is presented to me but I have certain reservations (is it so or not?): to what extent does the movement turn around in which a work that is unproductive from the point of view of capital becomes productive from the point of view of human life? And it is the labor that is applied to produce the means of subsistence that are going to be consumed by the unproductive laborers. From the point of view of capital it is unproductive: in the value of the labour power of the circulation worker is the labour done by all these workers who produced their means of subsistence, produced something which is not a use value for capital. If this is so, this contradictory development appears. And then, there would be workers who are productive for human life and unproductive from the point of view of capital. Someday I will sit down and think more carefully about whether this is the case or not. If so, from the point of view of capital there are many more unproductive laborers. Or the doubt is whether these workers who produce means of subsistence for the unproductive laborers are productive laborers from the point of view of capital if they have produced surplus value for their capitalist, but then I return to that no, because that value reappears as the value of a labor power that must be paid for with surplus value. So, the surplus value that would seem to have been appropriated by the capitalist who used the labor power of these workers who produced the means of subsistence was paid for with surplus value.

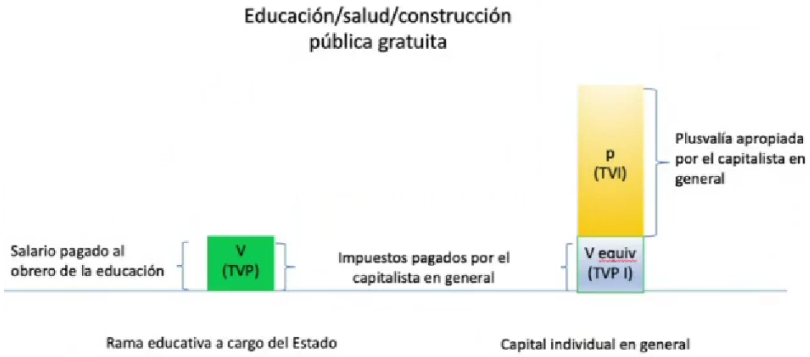
Linked to this is the question of the workers in education, health, the construction of public housing by the states... And depending on what social form the product of these workers is recognized, are they productive or are they unproductive? It is also necessary to distinguish whether it is a question of use values that are accessed in the condition of citizen (directly or indirectly) or use values produced by state workers who are accessed by buying the commodity, and it depends on what price the state sells those commodities.

Daiana: The last questions you asked, do they have to do with how these services (education, health and housing) are accessed in terms of whether it is public or private?

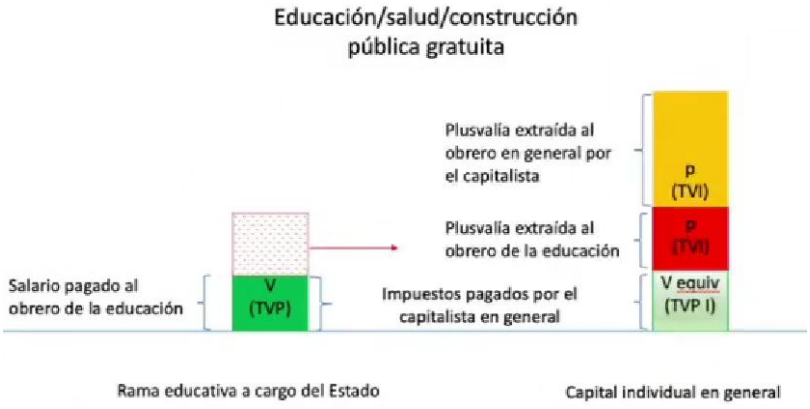
JIC: Yes, but later I had the experience that we Argentines have an image of what is public that is not universal. Thanks to my Chilean colleagues, what I took for granted that if it is public it is free, it is not like that: there is public education, not free. In that case, it could be discussed what is the price that the state as seller of that commodity is charging the buyer. It may be the full value, it may not. But the full contrast is: on the one hand it is a private capitalist who produces this commodity, and on the other hand the state that produces it, and it is accessed through the relationship of citizenship, appears as a right of the citizen (although it is not immediate in the case of minors, but of the adults who have power over them). And then, this is going to appear:


Educación/salud/construcción privada
Plusvalía del capitalista de la educación
Salario pagado al obrero de la educación
p (TVI)
V (TVP)
p (TVI)
Plusvalía apropiada por el capitalista en general
Valor de la fuerza de trabajo en general
Rama educativa a cargo del Estado
Capital individual en general

Let's first consider that, for example, education is a commodity. Marx is going to look at private education in this way (here let's forget if it goes into circulation or not, let's take it as if it were productive), and he says: the teacher sells his labor power for its value, there is an education capitalist who sells that commodity for its value... we are going to consider that the value of the teacher's labor power is equal, that the working day is equal (it is a more intense work, that is why the working day is shorter, despite the miserability that prevails in Argentina, which forces to have a double working day when it is supposed to be shortened), and it has its rate of surplus value. Let us suppose that education is the only commodity that must be bought in order to have labor power to sell, that therefore the full value of labor power is determined by the value of these commodities. That this [left column] is the amount of education that is needed for a normal working day and that it lasts this long [right column], and that therefore this is the value of the labor power of this worker, who is a worker in general, and the ratio of p/V labor power is the rate of surplus value. What happens when education (or whatever) is provided by the state without payment?



The state, in order to pay teachers, needs funds, which it has to collect from somewhere: via taxes[159]. Let's consider that taxes are paid by the capitalist in general. The state forms the labor force, gives it attributes only by spending... If the capitalist had to sell his commodities at value, which included paid and unpaid work, what the state is considering is that it has neither a deficit nor a surplus, and therefore taxes have to cover the value of the teacher's labor power, but no more and no less. Now the capitalist has this labor power, which in this scheme that we are making, as the only component of the value of the worker's labor power, is what it cost him in taxes that he had to pay to the state to educate the worker, and now he gives it to him without the cost of education, free of charge. And consequently, if we compare [this scheme and the previous one], if education is private and pays, this is the rate of surplus value, and if education is public and free, it is this: capital *in general* only cost what it paid as taxes so that its worker would be educated with the attributes of labor power that he needs. And then he appropriated all this mass of surplus-value, which has been produced by his worker in its entirety or a part by his worker and another part has come to this capitalist produced by another worker? The answer lies in this scheme:



The education worker produced with his surplus labour this part of the surplus value which the capitalist in general is going to appropriate for free. It was not produced by this worker [right column, lower block], because his working day is the same, he worked the same amount as before. The value of their labor power was actually all of this [whole left column], because the value of a commodity is not the price at which it was purchased in the abstract, it is the amount of socially

[159] This development by Iñigo Carrera is exposed in point 3.6 ("The production of the worker of large industry") of his work *Capital: historical reason, revolutionary subject, and consciousness* (2013). Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi.

necessary abstract labor that was expended in producing that commodity. And the labour that was expended in producing that commodity is all this, and consequently this worker [left] produced this quantity of value [left, upper block] which is appropriated by this capitalist as surplus value. It seems to have sprang from the labor of this worker [right-below], which in this case, since I took only education, would be what the capitalist had to pay in taxes, but it did not produce any surplus value than it would have produced under these conditions [private scheme].

It produced exactly the same amount of surplus value, only that a part of what appears as surplus value appropriated by the capitalists in general, is value (and therefore surplus value) produced by the unpaid labor of state teachers, health personnel, state construction workers... Consequently, free public education liquidates the individual capitalist of education (it cannot function because he would have to sell it at a higher price and capitals in general obtain it via taxes at a lower price), and from the point of view of the total capital of society the rate of surplus value increases, thanks to this surplus value produced by the workers of the state. The same happens with public construction, which is not only housing, but public works in general.

Daiana: Here we talk about these three issues together, being that construction has a difference, I understand, that has to do with the fact that there is no public construction company but there is an outsourced business, or should we not think about it that way at this time?

JIC: What happens is that it is today. Historically in Argentina, for a long period there is outsourcing very generously as now, but there is a whole period in which the state is the one that builds. National Roads, in an entire historical period, is the subject that builds the roads. And it appears in other forms as well that I did not take here, but that appears with public services when the state sets a tariff... When the electricity service was provided... Here it was SEGBA[160], but in general, there is a very long historical period that this service provided... First it was called the German Transatlantic Electricity Company, then the German-Spanish Company (I think it was called), and then the Italian-Argentine Electricity Company (CIAE). There, generously, the price was even higher. When the nationalization of public service companies comes, from that point on, SEGBA provides the service, it is not concessioned.

The state also manages the railways. Not only in Argentina, but also in France, this was present. Then, precisely, comes another phase in the accumulation of capital and this changes. But when these services were provided directly by the state, the railway fare could be located, let's say, here [free public services scheme]. It must be considered that the production of education requires not only living labor: it also requires dead labor (school building, work tools, blackboard, chalk...). I simplified it here. In Argentina, moreover, the state does not even collect the cost of the service via the fares, which is why the railroads have a deficit, and that plays a central role in the accumulation of capital in Argentina because if there is no tax,

[160] Electrical Services of Greater Buenos Aires.

and there is also no tariff, then the rate of surplus value is much higher. because the value of labor power or production costs are lower. But that corresponds to a phase of accumulation that will come later.

Ivan: I have two questions. If all capitalists pay for education via taxes, what is the benefit of paying for it in taxes? If what is not being paid for by the labor force is not paid through taxes...

JIC: But you don't pay the value of the commodity-education; you pay what would be the *cost price* of education, not the value of the commodity, which is paid when the education is private.

Iván: The difference is that the surplus value would not be paid if it were private.

JIC: Exactly, and that is surplus value that is available to all the capitals of society. This surplus value came out of the work of the education workers and was appropriated not by the education capitalist (which is the state), but by the whole of the capitalists in society.

Iván: The other question is: how is the usefulness of that "investment", of that public activity that is paid for through taxes, established? For example, the usefulness of the San Luis route having better conditions than the General Belgrano Road that goes from the Capital to La Plata and is destroyed, and millions of people should travel there, and the other route is in better condition but has very little traffic. It does not manifest itself in something that is effectively useful for the population as a whole.

JIC: Well, if there were a Rodríguez Saá here, I would answer: "Because we manage the province" [Laughs]. There are many mediations until we reach that point, but the general expression is what is said: the state has to have neither deficit nor surplus, it has to have its accounts balanced. Therefore, what he is going to be spending on the different things has to correspond to the normality of the unity of the national process, or in general, of capital accumulation. It has to be consistent with that. If he spends more than necessary on something that later in the unity of the movement is a non-use-value, it will happen that he has collected and that afterwards there are fewer use-values to consume. It will become clear in some way that from the point of view of the total capital of society, under the political forms, this was not the most convenient. This is the simplest determination: there is neither surplus nor deficit. And the services that the state provides, if it enhances the accumulation of capital within the scope that corresponds to that state, it is that this part of social wealth is well managed, well allocated. Then, the concrete forms: the discussions of the budgets, the analysis...

One must not forget that since it is an objectified social relationship and everything is bought and everything is sold, everything can be assigned according to what is paid for... Marx says that things that are not commodities such as morality are bought and sold. I would put it more in terms of the fact that it is the immoral act that is bought and sold, and that has a material existence, it is not in the "spirit" of the subject, but it does something concrete. Then, all the concrete

forms appear. The state is the representative of the total capital of society, but the interior of that total capital of society is full of antagonistic relations that will manifest themselves in different ways. But there is also a general thing, which is why at certain historical moments there is a whole series of use values that are produced by the state (we speak of "public services"). And it is not only in Argentina, in the rest of the world it has been general, except in the United States in some parts, in other parts education was not done by the Federal State but it is still free for the inhabitants of the different states. And why from a certain moment – which has, among other enormous advantages, the possibility of a very high productivity of labor due to the scale of the capital that operates – it is turned around, and all that which was accessed through the relationship of citizenship, is only accessible through the sale of labor power, or of the purchase of the commodity itself from individual capitalists who are not the state. But that's for another time.

Edgardo: I don't quite understand how individual capitals appropriate the surplus value generated by the workers of public education that the "state capital" does not appropriate, so to speak, what are the concrete forms under which they appropriate this surplus value.

JIC: The value of labor power is determined by the value of the commodities necessary to be able to produce that labor power with the attributes that capital demands of them: it demands educated workers, who have gone through a process of formal education. The value of those commodities is determined by the amount of socially necessary abstract labor that was expended in producing them. Consequently, in the amount of labor expended in producing that labor power as an educated laborer, all the labor time of the teachers of the state is included, but only a part of it is paid.

He paid them only a part of the value of that labor power, and the commodity is available to capital without having to pay the rest of the value. How does the capitalist in general dispose of this labor power? He does not have to pay anything for that labor power, it seems, because since the worker did not have to pay for his education, nothing has to be replaced. Since the state had to pay the value of the labor force, it had to get the money from somewhere: from taxes. And let's take that those taxes were paid by the capitalists (this is an ideal world, yes?), a sum that does not appear in their capital but as something they have spent. If the state had neither surplus nor deficit, it is because the taxes it collected corresponded to the value of the labor force it used.

Now the capitalist has at his disposal a labor power which, from the educational point of view, cost him only its value, but he has a use value which is the product of a greater quantity of socially necessary abstract labour. So, that part of unpaid work was not put in by the worker who works for the capitalist, because he works the same if he was educated by the state or if he had to pay for his education. In the value of the labour-power of the two labourers there is the same substance of value, but in the *price* of the labour-power of the private education worker must be included the full value of the labour embodied by the education worker. In the price of the labor power of the public education worker there is only a part of the

value, the other part is not: the surplus labor that the education workers yielded. When this labor power of the educated worker is put to work, the surplus labor time is greater not because the value of that labor power is lower, it is because the price of that labor power is below the value. Here one has to distinguish in this movement the value and what is going to appear, not even as a price, as what it costs the capitalist to dispose of that labor power.

When education is public and produces relatively universal workers, there is no room for private education because that worker has to be paid more dearly than the worker who comes from the public sector so that he can cover the full value of the use-education value. When there is a circumstance — and this also applies to public services — in which what is imposed is a strong differentiation in the conditions of sale of labor power, then the way to differentiate is: if the worker is going to do this work, the value of his labor power includes the full value of education, and if you're going to do this other job... Or if that worker is not needed, he does not have to pay the tax to the state to educate him, he has no education, public education disappears. But to reach these determinations we have a lot to do.

As we have vindicated ourselves as productive laborers, when we intervene in education... I always say: consciousness is the way in which each one governs his individual action as an organ of the process of social metabolism, no one can produce consciousness in another, but it is clear that the function of teaching work is to operate in the process in which other individuals (the students, the subject of that process) produce their consciousness. They are going to consume products of social labor (we have already seen the double character of labor and consumption —individual and social—), and this consciousness is a condition for having labor power to sell. So well, it has been a vindication for teachers in general, and those in public education in particular, because the others are seen to produce surplus value... But to the extent that one operates in the process in which future productive laborers produce themselves—one should advance in the last thing that I had raised earlier—there is indeed a production of surplus value. If workers are produced who are going to be unproductive, there is an economy of surplus value for the total capital of society through the work of teachers (paid or unpaid).

Next Wednesday we will start fully with the chapter on cooperation and I would suggest that we move beyond that, on the division of labor in manufacturing.

Chapter XI. Cooperation.

We have already seen what relative surplus value is. We saw the concrete way in which the obtaining of extraordinary surplus value (selling below social value and above individual value) is presented to individual capitalists, and how this is the movement that is imposed on all capitalists as a condition for competition. It is the bearer of the generalized increase in the productivity of labor insofar as this increase is reflected in the decrease in the value of the means of subsistence of the workers (the value of labor power decreases and the rate of surplus value increases), which is the relative surplus value. And what Marx was proposing in the last thing we had seen is that we were going to face the ways in which the productivity of labor governed by the production of relative surplus value is increased, as if the immediate purpose of the capitalist were the production of relative surplus value.

We had also argued that the starting point is the worker we had seen in the absolute surplus value section, which in turn is the old commodity producer, only he no longer has this private ownership of his means of production. It is from the materiality of that worker that we are going to see what ways there are to increase the productivity of labor and consequently increase the rate of surplus value. And the first form that appears is cooperation. Because when we looked at the commodity producer, he was the individual who could not cooperate with anyone: he had developed the attributes of the free individual, but he could only work in isolation. When we passed to the worker of absolute surplus value, this was underlying when we looked at his process of labour. The form of cooperation, then, is the step towards the development of the productive forces of labour, of its productivity, from the individual who worked in isolation.

The first material form that cooperation will have is that those individuals who until now worked in isolation, work in the same place and at the same time. So we are going to have this first step in this transformation of the materiality of work. Marx is not going to define the worker of simple cooperation as a *collective worker* at this point, but what appears is a set of individuals who, in their simplest form, each one does the same thing he would have done in isolation, but put to do it with other individuals who do exactly the same thing, but now as an individual organ of a collective process.

A second step appears in the social character of labor, or in the socialization of that individual labor (the first was that he now did that labor under the direction of the capitalist). A productive force of labor is going to appear which is not (I am going to put it in vulgar terms) the simple sum of the individual productive forces, but these productive forces, being realized in a collective process, acquire the character of social productive forces, and consequently are multiplied. And the forms by which the social character of this work, and therefore its productivity, develop: reciprocal learning, the processes of emulation, the reciprocal stimulation of the social character of labor.

How does the social character of this individual work become evident once it is materialized in its product? Each worker may have spent more or less time for his

greater or lesser skills... Because we must consider that the worker we are looking at does essentially manual work, where the subjectivity of that worker intervenes immediately in what productive capacities he is going to operate with, if the worker is more skilled he is going to spend more time, etc. And then, each unit of commodities is going to be produced with an individual labor time. But in so far as this worker of co-operation acquires a certain extent (and the development of the extension of this labourer is the basis of the increase of productivity through co-operation), the product of his labour, when it comes into circulation, will have the character of being the product of average social labour. Because it will be the average of the individual works that were done inside the cooperation workshop. And then it begins to become apparent, in contrast to the commodity producer we had when we left, where socially necessary labour became manifest in circulation as soon as the set of the various individual labour-times which *only* then converged, here the product enters circulation already as a materialisation of abstract labour done under normal conditions (although it has to prove that it is socially necessary). So, we have these first determinations that make the development of labor productivity through cooperation.

The fact that labor is going to have this social character within the private unit that is individual capital is sustained by the use of means of production that also acquire the condition of having a social character even before production begins. The immediate example of this is the workshop, the building where work is done. And here a double issue is going to appear. The workshop has to be large enough to accommodate that group of workers. Before this collective worker is constituted, the workshop must have the capacity for collective work and the capitalist must have a constant capital to provide these workers with the tools and raw materials they need to use individually but in this collective process.

The objective conditions of work determine its collective character, they are already making it clear that work is going to be done with this social character. And then a determination will arise that does not make the increase of the productivity of labor, but the constant capital of the capitalist. And a phenomenon is going to appear, which is the economy in the use of constant capital, the savings that this social character of labor within his individual capital means for the capitalist. If we look at the process of valorization as such, it has nothing to do with it, but as soon as the mass of capital at his disposal diminishes the capitalist, and as soon as this constant capital transfers its value to that of the commodity, its value appears diminished.

Take for example the workshop, and a worker trained in simple cooperation composed of 10 individual workers. If this capitalist were to maintain the work of his workers in a fully individual manner, he would have to have 10 workshops. Now instead he has a single workshop in which the 10 workers work. What it costs to build the workshop for 10 is much less than what it costs to build 10 workshops. So, when one looks at what happened to the value of the commodity—let's assume that there are 10 shoemakers—in the value of each pair of shoes is the living labor

that was expended, the labor put into the means of production (raw materials, tools, and the workshop). [...][161].

We were watching the value of constant capital reappear. […] Suppose that each individual workshop is worth $100, and you would have to have a capital of $1000 to make 10 individual workshops, and that the workshop for 10 workers put together is worth $500. Let's assume that the workshop is used to produce 100 units. While production is done in an absolutely individual way, in each unit of that commodity there is $1 in the value, which is the value of the constant capital that reappears in that of its product. Now we have a constant capital of $500 that is enough to make 1000 units. In each unit it now reappears as constant capital that transferred its value $0.50. The commodities produced inside the workshop were cheapened, and if they enter into the consumption of the workers to have labor power, the result is that labor power became cheaper, but not because the productivity of labor increased, but because of that economy in the use of that constant capital.

What does Marx do about this? If we are looking at how the increase in the productivity of labor drives up the rate of surplus value, this is a different determination that is not a movement proper to variable capital. So, even if it is present, Marx leaves it out because it is alien to the axis of what we are looking at, and he is going to return to the issue of the economy in the use of constant capital in the first chapters of Volume 3. When one looks at it from the formal point of view of the valorization of capital, where there is no distinction between constant and variable capital, but rather the ratio between surplus value and total capital (the rate of profit), this economy in the use of constant capital will also be reflected in an increase in the rate of profit.

This potentiation of the productive force of individual labor appears as a force that has a social character, as a mass force. If this increase in productivity, through this simple multiplication of individual workers who all do the same thing, already implies in itself the necessity of increasing variable capital, constant capital itself will have to multiply, and consequently there is a process of concentration of these means of production as the property of each of the capitalists. To be a capitalist you have to have this mass of capital that is multiplied, it is not simply that having money allows you to act as a capitalist, but having money on the scale necessary to put into operation this average work that has the determination to be done collectively.

[Alejandro mentions that there would also be an economy by having all the necessary tools in a single workshop and sharing them]

JIC: There is a limitation here when sharing the tools, because since everyone is doing the same thing at the same time, the use of the tools can have a highly individual character. If everyone takes the same time, they start at the same time to do the work, they all need the same tool at the same time. Here one has all the time the unfolding of the double character of the capitalist production process.

[161] The recording is cut off.

It is a process of material production governed by the production of surplus value. And a personification of who organizes labor appears in the figure of the capitalist, to whom the means of production belong. Here the need to organize this collective work appears, although it is still extremely elementary, and the existence of a plan of production will appear for the first time in the unfolding, and the authority of the capitalist, alien to the will of the workers, governing the work of the workers. Marx is going to make a first reference to what the size of this collective worker is. The coordination of their work becomes more complicated, and the figure (it is simply mentioned) of an individual who is a seller of labor power *but* who is going to act within this unit of production on behalf of the capitalist will appear: the foreman. When we have completed Marx's unfolding, beyond *Capital*, we will stop at what this subject implies.

I forgot one thing in economics in the use of constant capital: it now appears as if the capacity of capital to valorize itself arises not only from the increase in the productivity of labor, but from a process completely independent of the labor process itself. And the first step appears in how the source of the valorization of capital is erased. The individual capitalist who introduces this process of social labor when all the other capitalists have one workshop per worker and he happens to have 1 to 10, will have an extraordinary surplus value, the individual value of his commodities will fall below the social value because he has economized constant capital. And it appears as if there were two sources of valorization of capital: the diminution of the quantity of living labor contained in each unit of product, and on the other hand it seems to spring from the decision of the capitalist to have resolved to make a unified workshop.

When Marx unfolds the forms of cooperation starting from this first, simpler form, where each worker does the same as the others and produces an integral unit of commodity, a process of simple cooperation appears where everyone does the same thing but each of them does not operate on the body of an independent commodity that produces in an integral way. and consequently it is the materialization of an average social labor not in its individuality but the average of the whole [...][162], in its materiality.

It is no longer so because each one is materially the product of an individual labor and since it comes out en masse it appears as the product of an average labor: now it is the product of a labor done collectively that adds up the labor power of a set of individuals who carry a capacity to perform an average social labor. and each unit is already the product of this average social labor. This is what will appear as the developed form of cooperation. Marx takes the example of construction workers who have to move bricks from one place to another instead of each carrying a brick. In the chapter, Marx mocks an author who says that with 3 workers there is already average social labor, because one is below, another above and another in the middle. But when the mass is growing and becomes a mass labor force, that is where the character of average social labor appears.

[162] Cut in the recording.

This development is taking us to the limit of cooperation as a modality governed by the production of relative surplus value to multiply the productivity of labor. The process of emulation, learning and reciprocal stimulation that constitutes a social labor force... There comes a point when the very extension of this collective body begins not to have an effect on increasing the productivity of labor. What he shows within his scope is that if we begin with the fullness of private labor, where there was no room for any type of direct cooperation between the producers, and when we look at the capitalist and the worker we saw that there is an advance in the socialization of private labor, but that we never stop to look materially at what the worker did from the point of view of how he advanced in the socialization of that labor What we have before us now is that in the capitalist mode of production, in order to produce capitalistically, private labour *must have within it* the character of social labour, even if only in the form of cooperation in its simplest form: one cannot produce capitalistically if collective labour is not set in motion.

If we were making a logical representation, we would say that it cannot be: the simple model of the commodity producer is invalid because the concrete model that brings us to cooperation says that commodities can only be produced by working collectively. And what we have is that from the purity of social labor done privately and independently, what we are deploying and seeing is the process of socialization of that private labor. When we look at this socialization of private labor, the opposite of what we had when we started, we find this contradictory manifestation. At the same time that we are seeing the development of the productive forces of social labor, since these social productive forces belong to capital (they are productive forces of capital), what we have is that their development has the historically specific form of the development of the capitalist process of production. And Marx goes on to point out that cooperation is the first change that the effective labor process undergoes when it is absorbed[163] by capital.

One has a double movement: this is the process of development of a general historical necessity for the transformation of labour into a process of a social character, from this purely individual labour process of the commodity producer, and at the same time it is the process of valorisation of capital, and it is the form that capital uses to exploit this social labour by multiplying the production of surplus value through the intensification of productivity of work. Throughout Volumes 1, 2 and 3, Marx will mark this double character and the contradiction that encloses the process of development of the human productive forces, and therefore the development of the generic human being, that of being able to produce oneself from one generation to the next consciously and voluntarily through work, but in an *alienated* form. Powers are then subject to the alienated character, they are not mere powers of the development of the cooperation of labor, but of *alienated labor*.

[Alejandro asks about the reason for this inversion that he sees in the text that cooperation appears as non-specific to the capitalist mode of production and then

[163] It seems that this is "subsumption", which means "to incorporate", to absorb into a body as its organ (not to "subordinate", nor to "dominate" externally).

as the peculiar historical form that distinguishes that mode of production from the others.]

Maybe I'll repeat myself... I try to put it more from the "methodological" point of view. There are commodities in other modes of production, it is not exclusive to the capitalist mode of production. But we want to answer ourselves with respect to our own condition as political, historical subjects. What we need to answer is not the historical genesis of the commodity, but what it is. Since we find the commodity by asking ourselves about our subjectivity, "inside", we try to answer what the commodity is in *the capitalist mode of production*. And what is specific to the commodity, makes its essence, is that it is the product of social labor carried out privately and independently. That's where the crux of the matter appeared.

What is the first thing we saw? The purity of social labor done privately, which appeared as an absolutely individual work, as our starting point. Once this is discovered, the external comparison appears, a contrast, first with other ways of organizing labor: here it is not organized in this way, the producer does not have to produce his social relation because he already has it before he has produced. So, the way in which this work is governed is different. When historical development appears, it is simply because it is something that, when one looks at it in the present of that commodity production, cannot be answered and has no choice but to go, but already knowing what the result of that historical development is.

When the movement of this social relation unfolds in circulation (money as a means of circulation, treasure and means of payment), it becomes clear that the immediate purpose of social production is not the production of use values for human life, but the production of the social relation. And the next step is the production of the social relation by the social relation itself: the movement of money as capital. So, progress has been made in this: now the concrete and immediate purpose with which social labor is set in motion is the multiplication of capital, which is going to mean that all the powers of social labor done privately are going to be governed as powers of capital, they are powers, so to speak, of alienated labor. Which means that the movement of the materiality of work, which is not ... I'm going to say something that is kind of risky and I'm going to regret it, but one can't explain what happens to the materiality of work by the very movement of the materiality of work, if you don't have to explain it *because this process is organized as a process of capital accumulation*.

I'm missing something in the middle, but I'm going to the cooperation thing. Marx does not begin by comparing the cooperation of previous social forms. Once he has deployed the cooperation proper to the capitalist mode of production, he is going to compare it with the others and he is going to say: the purpose pursued with this cooperation is not the same. Here the purpose that governs it is to enhance the appreciation of capital. If it is at the expense of the worker, of the direct producer, well, at the expense of the worker. So, now you can compare, once you developed what's specific in this way. But when you look at what is specific, this determination appears with respect to...

When Marx says that this is the first step in the development of the properly capitalist character of labor, up to this point what appeared was (I do not want to advance because it comes next, but...) that here there is a worker and a labor process that is taken in its materiality from the purity of private labor. That is not labor in the capitalist mode of production. Labor in the capitalist mode of production is social labor within individual capital. And it is not governed to abstractly enhance the productivity of society's labor, but to multiply the valorization of capital. But from now on we know that when we look at work in the capitalist mode of production, it is collective work, never done individually. Then the question arises again as to how far this deployment that we are doing corresponds to a development of a historical nature, and to what extent is the deployment of this simpler form of social labor carried out privately and independently and how it unfolds its potential. Because cooperation is a power of free and individual work.

I know that I tend to put it on... It is not a logical development even because of the covers, there is no logic here: what is being said is that this has a power, how does it deploy it? In this way. How do you increase the productivity of labor (at first it seemed a matter of human labor in general, now it is this way of organizing)? Through doing it in a social way. And so I tend to focus on that aspect and downplay whether or not it's a historical sequence. Marx makes the development and presents it strongly as a historical sequence. Every now and then he mentions that this comes first, and then this capacity develops, and we are going to see it in the two forms of relative surplus value that follow: he is going to talk about the *period* of manufacture and the *period* of large-scale industry, as separate historical periods. And in the exhibition of manufacture it reaches a point where, as in that of cooperation, a more powerful form of cooperation comes to appear, based on the fact that each one does a partial task... But if the craftsman of the beginning who made a complete pair of s 's, I can only make that transit when I saw a worker who all do the same thing but do it on the same body of commodities. Then, that development appears sprouting from the previous form, in the simplest way, and a lot of reference to the historical character of that development.

And I return to something that I raised not long ago: there is a whole line within Marxism linked to the "New Reading" of Marx – and with increasingly degraded things, of the proposal that supply and demand determine the value of commodities – which maintains to the letter that Marx never said that the simple production of commodities was the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production. And Marx says it verbatim in the draft published as Volume 3, and he says it throughout the development several times. One of the ways in which he says this is when he makes the contrast, putting what is specific about this transformation, that it does not only arise in the capitalist mode of production, that when one looks at it it also sprouts in previous modes of production. So, nothing is going to be explained by historical development. I tend to focus more on the development that there is an existence here that has a potency to realize, and on the realization of that potency. In the text it is much more combined with the exposition of those historical forms.

[Thomas asks if there are not two "demystified" Hegelian laws here, that of the quantitative to the qualitative and a teleology.]

I would say that there is no teleology here: there is a movement that one is accompanying in its development, it is a pure description made "with the eyes of thought", which is what this is seen with. I don't know where this is going to take me, I am wondering about my subjectivity and the only purpose I have is to answer myself about it in order to organize my action, to know the need for my action, what potentialities I am a bearer.

Regarding the transformation of quantity into quality... I would put it in these terms: this transformation is the outward manifestation of quality. Because what makes the productive force of labor be enhanced is what the human being is, not "the quantity." What quantity does is to show that there is a power in the human being to act collectively, which is discovered because the form of organization of work dissolves the community: there is no community, but isolated individuals who are incorporated. So it seems that it was the change in the number of isolated individuals that caused this quality to exist. And this quality, which is manifested, is manifested from a certain quantitative determination, and one can operate on that quality on the basis of operating on quantitative determination: I only know that if I have 1 worker and I move to 5 or 10 positions together, it can have more power (if I put 2000 maybe not), without knowing why. In fact, this is the way logical representation operates: by transforming quantitative differences into qualitative differences. But the power of qualitative transformation does not spring from quantitative difference, it is the other way around: it becomes apparent from a certain magnitude.

Nor is it a problem of the transformation of quantity into quality. In the *Anti-Dühring*, Engels makes a display of this, and when he reaches the end of the chapter (the whole book is written with great irony), Dühring accuses Marx of allowing himself to be carried away by this "law" of the transformation of quantity into quality. I don't remember exactly, but Engels says: "Dühring is right." And he quotes Napoleon as saying that a French soldier against a North African Mamluk, the Mamluk defeats him. That 2 Frenchmen equal 1 romper. And that – I don't remember, but let's say – 10 French soldiers, inevitably defeat 20 Mamluks. And Engels says: what does this prove? For letting himself be carried away by the transformation of quantity into quality, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo [laughs].

Anti-Dühring *is worth reading*. I am going to make a clarification that my daughter makes to me: the experience of each one does not have to serve others, because each one is the bearer of his or her own need. For me it was an extremely important book in my personal development, apart from the fact that it was fun. So, let's leave the problems of quantity and teleology, let's leave it to Hegel... Another thing is that I knew a lot about mathematics: I found *Anti-Dühring very stimulating* because I was looking for the problem of method due to a series of circumstances in the way I had been advancing, and from there I read *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and Lenin's so-called "Philosophical Notebooks", and from there I read the *Science of Logic* Hegel, which was another very important milestone in my

development, and the mathematics part was particularly attractive to me. Why is what you propose as teleology alien to me? I read it because of a problem with the method, and all the other things that appeared were like... Okay. I didn't read him thinking that he is an idealist and that then he is going to be inverted, but: to see how this individual makes progress, what he starts from, what he is facing. And the chapter on mathematics gave me a lot. So, well, I leave aside this homage to Hegel, Lenin and Engels, and continue with our problem of the development of the productive forces of labor through cooperation governed by the production of relative surplus value.

I am going to allow myself to add two things. There is an example that is immediately recognizable to all of us with respect to cooperation processes, which is what happens with the structures of formal education. It is a process of cooperation between the "learners" as subjects of a collective work governed by a plan of someone who has the power to govern it. But the powers of the social character of labor are manifested only with a certain number of individuals participating in this process. There is a process of individual work that each one is doing, but which acquires the character of social labor when he intervenes by cooperating with others. The economy is revealed in the use of constant capital because it implies a lower outlay of value, but also from an abstract point of view of promoting social labor: having a classroom for a group and not a classroom for each one... And the limitation of the cooperation process appears. And it appears much more quickly than in the process of manual work that after a certain number of students the effect of collective work is lost and a whole series of negative effects of distraction, the impossibility of listening to what is being said, of seeing what is being written on the blackboard...

And on the other hand, there is an aspect of cooperation in the capitalist mode of production that shows the contradictory and antagonistic character of this mode of production. Cooperation allows the workers to establish their relationship of solidarity because they are placed together, and at the same time sharpens their relationship of competition. Because as they see each other, the less skilled, slower worker or whatever, what they see is that with the antagonistic relationship that he has with the capitalist, the latter compares him with the other workers who are there and says: this one is useless. And he is going to throw him out. And then, the worker, as his competition is sharpened, tries not to be the worst, and this antagonistic relationship between the workers is a source of surplus value for capital, it becomes a multiplication of the productivity of labor, of the intensity of labor for greater efficiency because there is no dead time.

Alejandro [Chat]: I wanted to write that Marx has already stated on several occasions that for money to function as capital it has to have a certain magnitude and now it appears that it must concentrate a certain mass of workers. But has there been any determination behind these magnitudes in each branch of production so far? This comes to mind from what Tomás mentioned.

JIC: Like everything we are going to see about the development of the productive force of labor governed by the production of relative surplus value, there are branches of production where the materiality of labor lends itself more

to the development of this way of multiplying the productivity of labor and others that less. It is a problem that arises from the materiality of work. But I don't know if that's what you're referring to. There are branches where the empowerment of this productive force is greater and it is also easier to group workers to work together. Cooperation in the artisanal manufacture of shoes, it is clear that it is a job that requires some learning and development of skills and that there is no problem in expanding the number of workers. The work of extracting water from a well does not seem to lend itself to cooperation to that same degree. What can you put in, 2 or 3 workers drawing water from the same well? To dig one well next to the other? It can't be done.

One of the classic branches where cooperation in this regard is most limited is agricultural production, and I believe that it also extends to mining production. And that is why the very great isolation of the rural worker is classic, because cooperation... We have to think of it in very elementary and primitive terms of production organization, and also in productions where collective work is not done. Normally, where agricultural production is done with centralized irrigation, there are very extensive simple cooperation processes. But in livestock production, which consists of the herding of certain types of animals that an isolated individual can control, the isolation of these workers appears. But well, it is a question of concrete forms that go beyond what appears here.

Chapter XII. Division of labor and manufacturing.

1. The dual origin of manufacture.[164]

I propose that we look very elementary at the development that follows, the division of labor in manufacturing, and which is in reality the unfolding of cooperation: they all operate together, but now instead of all doing the same work, each one does a partial, specific task. Marx puts it openly by saying that what one sees of the division of labor in manufacturing is the same as what one sees in an individual worker who does all the tasks necessary to produce a commodity: he does a series of partial tasks that make up together the labor necessary to produce this unit of use-value. And he is going to point out that here he is looking at manual work, whose definition is linked to the fact that the tool is in the hand of the worker, that the control of the tool is in the person of the worker, the arm produces the force that the tool applies to the work object. We continue to look at manual labor, and therefore the manual skill of the worker is what sustains the whole development of the production process.

But now, that ability that in the workers we saw so far was the ability to perform *all* the tasks necessary to produce a commodity, is now fragmented... [...][165]. It is taking this job where what matters is the handling of the tool, but now it has become the handling of the tool necessary to perform a partial task within this organism, and now the term collective worker is going to appear[166]. And what is going to begin to appear then is: that universe of capacities that the worker of simple cooperation had, capable of doing all the tasks required to produce a certain use value, whether he was purely individual or he did it with others producing the same use value together, is now reduced to a task that is absolutely limited. simplified. The more the movement of the worker's arm in the grip of the tool is simplified, the more each worker is divided and specialized in a partial task, and the more the productivity of the labor of this collective worker is multiplied. And here is going to appear something that at the end of the chapter is going to reveal its role, and that is that the individual worker is becoming an automatic and limited organ of the whole collective operation.

Now the collective worker integrates differentiated individual workers, each specialized in an increasingly partial task (because it is the way to increase the productivity of labor through the division of labor in manufacturing), and what is going to appear—and Marx is going to assimilate it to machinery, because he speaks of the specific machinery of the *period* of manufacture (he emphasizes the historical process)—is the body of the collective worker, the ensemble of these partial workers, each one applied to a certain task.

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[164] I recommend not taking the chapter's epigraphs literally, as their exposition is relatively disorderly. Every effort has been made to match the content.

[165] There is a cut in the recording and it repeats again.

[166] It is mentioned in section 3 of this chapter.

On this basis, we will start the next one by looking at all the determinations. I always organize the exposition of this by looking at what happens to the materiality of labor, what happens to the workers as a result, and what happens to the capitalist (although if I follow Marx that does not fit yet, sometimes there are references, but not as an axis of development), and what happens with the structure of capital and its magnitude. And finally, what is the limit of this way of increasing the productivity of work, what barrier does it come up against? In simple cooperation [the way to accentuate it] is that everyone is doing the same thing, none of them were specialized in a partial task, and here they are. So, we are always going to try to cover these aspects as the axis of development. I know that in this part of the workshop I tend to speed up because I start to get desperate, to see if we can finish at the end of the year[167]. But if I speed up too much, let me know. And furthermore, this acceleration does not imply a decrease in interventions, but on the contrary: as I go more on the axes, there may be more discussion.

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2. The partial worker and his tool.

We had said that we were going to look at what happens in the materiality of labor, what happens to the worker, what happens to capital, as we look at the different ways of increasing the productivity of labor governed by the production of relative surplus value. And we were going to see the barrier that each one had.

With regard to the process of co-operation, where all the workers did the same task—there are no partial workers—we had seen progress in how now they all produce the body of the same commodity, which is the overcoming of the scope of simple co-operation which can only increase the productivity of labour by extending itself, and which in that extension has its same limit. And then we had work in manufacturing, where the different tasks that used to be done by the same worker are now transformed into partial operations and each worker is in charge of a partial task. We had pointed out that what we have here is manual work and that it depends on the skill, on the skill of the worker, how the tool is going to be applied to the object of work in such a way as to transform its use value. Each worker is subject to an increasingly partial task.

As a result of this I am going to make a clarification (Marx is also going to raise it elsewhere), because it appears here that the worker is tied for life to this partial task. And this brings us before two determinations that are worth dwelling on. Because this is the same image that came from the time of Richard and Smith. That he is tied for life to a task implies that the speed of change in the technical conditions of work was much slower than we are used to seeing today. And another condition is that the duration of the productive life of the worker was much shorter than it is today. By 1820 the estimate in England is that life expectancy at birth was 30 years, and in 1835-36 there is a new calculation and it had been extended to 35 years, but in the case of individuals who exceeded 10

[167] It ended in June 2023.

years of age, life expectancy is 50 years, which speaks of the enormous weight of infant mortality. So when one sees this thing that one is tied for life to a partial task, and one looks at it with today's eyes and it seems that it is impossible for one to be tied to the same task with the same technical conditions, one has to consider this double determination.

Then, that worker becomes an automatic organ that works according to the limited operation that he is going to perform. Now we have a development that contrasts with the incipient collective worker of simple cooperation. What there is is a collective, total worker, who is combined, who each has organs specialized in a certain partial task, and each of them is a partial worker. And Marx goes on to make this parallel that the collective worker is the specific "machinery" of the period of manufacture[168], contrasting with the later development of machinery proper.

3. The two fundamental forms of manufacturing: heterogeneous manufacturing and organic manufacturing.

What we have then is that the development of the division of labor differentiates the workers according to the partial task they have to perform. There are those that need a more developed skill and others that do not require any special skills, a partial specialty that consists of not having any specialty (pawns). And here it will seem to be a source of surplus value, but it does not correspond to the increase in the productivity of that labor.

To the extent that workers who do not need specialization do not require any development of their labor force. We saw that the value of the labor power *of one generation* includes the expenditure on commodities necessary for the next generation to develop its labor power until it is able to work, and here we have that part of that development disappeared. Before, we had artisans, who had to go through a process of training even within the labor process itself (in manual work you can only learn by working) to develop with the necessary skills to produce a whole commodity, and therefore, while they are working, they are learning and their consumption is still part of the value of the labor power of the previous generation. or they are not fully productive. And now this consumption of use-values has disappeared, and consequently the value of the labour-power of these workers has diminished. And not because the productivity of labor increased, but because now part of the expenditure that the working family or the individual worker had to make to produce future labor power or his labor power disappeared, they are no longer part of the socially necessary abstract labor that is expended in producing it. And we have an increase in the rate of surplus value thanks to this cheapening.

There is an example that I used to mention (now I don't have it so fresh), it is not that of the period that Marx is going to define as manufacturing, but it is a great leap in the productivity of manual labor, which is the development of the manual

[168] Reference in section 3, in Marx, K. (1977: 287), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

assembly line. There are studies where this is expressed in the automotive industry. In the assembly of an automobile – which came from the process of assembling carriages – the collective worker involved in that production was made up of a master craftsman and auxiliary workers with different degrees of training. To become a master assembler you had to spend years in the labor process learning all the tasks of assembly. When the manual assembly line is implemented in the Ford factory, there is a study immediately after in which the percentages (I put them arbitrarily because I don't remember the exact proportions, but more or less), something like 80% of the workers master their task after a day's work: they have nothing more to learn. There are something like 15% who master it after a week. And there are 5% or less who need two or three months to master their task. And here what is going to be evidenced is that the time that the worker needs to form his labor force has disappeared and therefore the consumption of use values that he needs to develop those productive attributes. Then the rate of surplus value will rise sharply.

4. Division of labor within manufacturing and division of labor within society.

When we look at the expression of the social character of labour in the simplest form of co-operation, where each worker produced an integral commodity separately from the others, this character became manifest externally to the process of production, in so far as it resulted from the average of the labour-time required by the various individual workers. Now we are going to have that the material process of work itself has the immediate character of a social process, and consequently, the product of that work, is materially the product of social labor, is born in production, always within an organization of work in general where it is carried out privately and independently.

When we look at this development of the division of labor in manufacturing, we have that each special process is simplified, but at the same time the number of these partial tasks is multiplied, and consequently the size of that collective worker is multiplied. And within this collective worker the question of a determination of proportionality between the different partial organs appears. Not only does the size of that collective worker grow, but the size has to be proportional according to the time that the different partial tasks take. We have not simply an extension of the worker, nor simply a multiplication within the worker of the individual organs, but this multiplication has to observe certain rules of quantitative proportionality. We are going to have a direct allocation of collective labor within the workshop that is going to be reflected in the character of the commodity as a product of directly social labor. And here he is going to contrast what happens outside the production process where the private character of work prevails, and inside the workshop where a direct organization of work that is done in an immediately social way prevails. He will make the observation that the part-time worker does not produce an integral commodity, the commodity is the product of this social labour.

In order to be able to carry out this process of production with this social character, a concentration of the means of production as the property of the same capitalist is required. And here we have the contrast, and again the difference between the method of logical representation and the development we are doing becomes visible. Because now we see that a producer of commodities is the opposite of what we had when we started: he is not an isolated individual, but a collective worker; he does not have his full control over his labor process as a collective individual, because the capitalist does; and he is not the private owner of his means of production, which are now means of production that serve only for collective labor. And then we are going to find this transformation, which we can only discover – that in reality, in the capitalist mode of production commodities are the products of a collective worker – having started from the fact that they were products of strictly individual labour.

Inwardly it is a direct organization of this process of collective labor, outwardly it is an indirect organization, and therefore unity and how the different masses of labor are assigned to the production of the different commodities continues to be governed by indirect unity. Unity only arises a posteriori, inside the workshop it arises a priori. There is an authority that organizes labor, which is personified by the capitalist, in contrast to what happens in the general social relationship where no owner of commodities has authority over the others and what rules is competition. Marx is going to make an observation about this contrast and how it is presented to bourgeois consciousness, and how those who make the apology of the factory system, of this planned organization of production, of the social character of labor, are the first to be indignant at the violation of the rights of private property and freedom. when a general conscious organization is proposed, not within each unit of production, but with an immediately social character, and they denounce that on this basis the whole of society would be converted into a factory[169].

[Tomás asks who says the latter]

JIC: Marx does not name names there (as far as I remember), but he says that those who make the apology for the factory organization [...] on the one hand celebrate that inside the factory it is like this, but they consider it an aberration with respect to the general organization of social life, an attack on private property and freedom. Because a universal common organization of social labor implies social ownership over the means of production, because if not, there is no unity. Then this appears to them.

Thomas: What if we go after this worker who coerces the other workers? I don't remember if it was here or later where the capitalist is as evidenced now it is no longer necessary.

JIC: It begins in the chapter on cooperation, and here it will be extended. But one thing must be taken into account, and that I am going to follow very strictly, and

[169] "And it is characteristic that these enthusiastic apologists for the factory system, when they want to make a strong accusation against what would be a general organization of labor on the basis of the whole society, say that it would turn the whole of society into a factory." (p. 290).

then we are going to look at it again. The figure that Marx takes with respect to a salesman of labor power who exercises control over other workers is that of the foreman, and he does not go beyond that in this development. When he states that there is a hierarchy of workers with more specialization, that greater specialization does not go beyond manual labor. We are going to advance in development with all the scope that it gives to Marx and then we will look at it again and see if that scope is still the same today.

It should be borne in mind that for Marx, throughout *Capital* (and only in Volume 3 will there be references to management by sellers of labor power), the figure of the capitalist is the one that is present in the organization of labor within individual capital. In Volume 3 some aspects will appear, saying that in reality this function can be fulfilled by an employee, and another thing that will appear is that there are forms of capital where the function of property is *separated*, but the function is still in the hands of the capitalist. He will make a differentiation between the capitalist who owns the capital and the capitalist who performs the function.

5. Capitalist character of manufacture.

As here the productivity of labor grows with the fragmentation of tasks, the number of workers, of means of production, and therefore the mass of capital that is required to be concentrated on behalf of each capitalist in order to operate, multiply. What it is going to propose is that the transformation of the means of life and the means of production into capital is spreading throughout society. And here two questions are going to appear (not exactly in this order):

(1) This division of labor already engenders, sustains, such a productivity of the labor of the collective worker that it liquidates the possibility of competition of the private producer of commodities. In the capitalist mode of production we now see that by its own development there is no room for independent producers of commodities.

2) To be a capitalist you have to have an ever-larger mass of capital. We must buy the labor power of more workers and provide them with more means of production. But now, with respect to constant capital, there appears a contradictory movement with respect to the potentiality of capital to valorize itself, not variable capital but capital as a whole. As the number of workers increases (and the productivity of labor increases), the amount of raw materials with which this collective worker must be provided increases.

If we had a worker who alone processed 1 unit of raw material/day, we had to have the constant capital necessary to buy that unit and [the variable capital] to pay the value of this worker's labor power. Let us suppose that the collective worker in this division of manual labor consists of 10 partial workers, and that this passage from 1 to 10 has made it possible to double the productivity of these 10 workers. When you look at what happens to the constant capital put into raw materials, you see that you have to multiply the units of raw materials by 10, but

since they doubled their productivity, you have to provide them with 20 units/day. And that means that while variable capital multiplied from 1 to 10, constant capital multiplied from 1 to 20. And constant capital is not capable of valorization.

We find this contradictory movement in the sense that, in order for the productivity of living labour to increase, and consequently to increase the rate of surplus value, the constant capital, which is not capable of producing surplus value, put into raw materials must grow more than proportionally as variable capital grows. If we were to take a total capital that remains still (in terms of its magnitude), this implies that now if we compare the variable capital with the constant capital put into raw materials (dispense with tools and so on), we will find that there is a relatively smaller part of that capital that is capable of producing surplus value; it produces it at a larger rate, but its proportion to the capital advanced applied to this production is smaller. Marx develops it with the division of labor in manufacturing, but one could already see it in simple cooperation, only that there the increases in the productivity of labor are much more limited. We found this, it is a contradiction that was left open to us.

We had this progressive transformation of the whole of the means of production and of the means of subsistence into capital. What happened to the materiality of work and what happens to the worker with this transformation?

With respect to the materiality of labor, capital in the process of production exists in the form of the physical individuality of the workers who are working. It is a structure of production made up of partial, fragmented workers, and it belongs to the capitalist because he bought the labor power from that group of workers. Consequently, all the productive power which shows this process of combining partial labours to have appears as a productive power of capital. Capital is the owner of both material and human conditions of production, that is, the life process of capital, the potentiality in the multiplication of productivity appears as if it were an attribute of it.

Then he will make a contrast between simple cooperation, where individual labor did not change for the development of cooperation, with the division of labor in manufacturing, where the materiality of labor is revolutionized, since each worker does not produce a whole commodity, and has to specialize in a partial task at the expense of destroying all other individual productive potentiality that he may have. And he says: in addition to distributing labor among the different individuals, what it does is to fragment the individual himself. And that individual can only function as an individual organ in an "automatic apparatus" to which he is incorporated as a partial organ. This will be followed by a new determination as to why the worker has no more commodities to sell than his labour-power. It can no longer produce a commodity on its own not only because it does not have the means of production, but because it no longer knows how to produce a whole commodity on its own. It can only work as a partial organ within a collective worker, which is formed within the capitalist's workshop. So, this synthesis is going to appear saying: now (I put the figure that Marx gives) "the forehead of the worker" of the manufacture has stamped the mark of its owner, capital.

When we saw the 4 apparent forms that the buying and selling of labor power presents in circulation, it appeared to us that freedom prevails because it is a relationship between 2 free individuals. And now what is appearing in the development of the production process is that one of these free individuals has an owner, who is not the capitalist: the owner is capital. When we continue advancing, in the chapters of reproduction, we will see the fullness of the development of this determination, but here we are already seeing the content, the substance that is enclosed in the appearance of the relationship between two free individuals.

So, he develops how this question that the productive powers of this collective worker are a force of capital, the unity is placed in capital, posing that, in contrast, even... He says: the independent farmer, the artisan, the peasant who develop their limited capacities because they work in isolation, individually, are no longer the attribute of each member of the collective worker. Now it is enough that this capacity is present in some member of the collective worker and can be put to work, even if there is a part of that collective worker that is deprived of any development of these attributes. And that collective capacity confronts the individual workers as an attribute of capital, which has the capacity to organize that process.

Marx goes on to point out that this starts with simple cooperation, where the ability to decide what is produced, how and how much, is no longer an attribute of the worker, but here it is developed as: *all* the collective productive force *is the force of capital.* And the ability to start production is the strength of capital. And he is going to make an advance observation because he is going to reach its fullness in large-scale industry, and he is going to propose science separate from labor as an independent power of production and thrown into the service of capital. In the division of labor in manufacturing, he will propose that the productive force of a social character of the collective worker develops at the expense of the mutilation of the individual productive forces.

[Tomás asks about the historical period in which this worker develops]

[…] When Marx speaks of a historical period, he locates, if I remember correctly, the period of manufacturing throughout the eighteenth century or shortly before, and which is supposed to end with the Industrial Revolution. But if one looks at it in concrete development, there is a revolution in the production process where machinery already absolutely prevails, which is born from the manual assembly line, and it is a division of manual labor: each worker takes up his tool. There will come a time when those tools will have become a manual machine tool. Later that will change and it will become a machine in the fullness of development with robotization. But if one says: manufacturing played a role in a historical epoch... It had a revolutionary role at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it is not until the end that it begins to be displaced. But it is revolutionary in the midst of the era of Big Industry and the development of machinery. And in this exhibition the development of a historical character appears, because when he compares it with the peasant or the artisan, they come from another society, not simply from the capitalist mode of production, and then he will make a reference to that condition.

[…] I'm going to do something I shouldn't do, but... We are talking about something that in Volume 2 (also in the penultimate chapter of Volume 1) Marx is going to refer to as "industrial capital". And when it comes to this development, it says that it is not the first historical form of capital: its first historical forms are usurious capital and commercial capital, and from its development industrial capital is born, and things are turned around, and now commercial capital, and what is no longer usurious capital, but capital lent at interest, become forms of the movement of industrial capital.

When we look at primitive accumulation, commercial and usurious capital arrived in America in 1492. This capital is not the social relation that governs the unity of social production and consumption *in the society from which they come*: in it the unity is still governed by bonds of personal dependence, of which commercial capital and usurious capital are concrete forms, organs. And in the development of the movement of these capitals, things are turned upside down and the bonds of personal dependence (proper to the feudal relation) become forms of the capitalist mode of production. The Subsistence of Constitutional Monarchies... They are no longer the ones that give unity to the process of social life within that national space: they are nothing more than a form that carries that unity.

One can speak of the capitalist mode of production when one is looking at *full development* (but which is still in development today), and by action or omission of capital, everything on earth is the product of this social relation. And even human populations that seem not to be the product of this social relationship are. One looks at that and can say: it is not plenitude because the capitalist mode of production moves, advances in the development of its plenitude (we have already seen that it is revolutionary). One looks at the nineteenth century, and of course it is the capitalist mode of production that is advancing in governing unity: the conquest of India by England is in the middle of the century, until that moment there was no capitalist mode of production. The conquest of China and Japan is more or less from the same period.

So, this happens: in Argentina in particular – because it is what I know best, but I understand that in all of Latin America – at a certain point there is a political discussion in the organizations that recognize themselves as the political expression of the working class with respect to the prevailing mode of production in Latin America. And the discussion begins as to whether it is the capitalist mode of production or not in the colonial era, in the nineteenth century, or in the twentieth century, or if it is the feudal mode of production... And that discussion has the political sense that there is a whole line of political organization that said that for a national society to enter into the capitalist mode of production there must be a bourgeois-democratic revolution. But since in Argentina there were none or they were frustrated, then there would be a feudal society, and consequently (I will take another leap), the working class would not yet be developed. From positions that the working class cannot have a political party because it is not developed, because it is a feudal society, to positions that the working class is not developed but can only be the revolutionary subject. So, they

say that now we have to make the democratic revolution and we have to ally with the national bourgeoisie. And there is the discussion of whether this revolution has to be led by the national bourgeoisie or the working class.

This is a discussion that dates back to the 1930s and continues to this day, although it is practically irrelevant, but until the 1980s the problem of the alliance with the bourgeoisie was in force in political organizations. Today there are some who make it practical and have no doubt [Laughter], but this was the position of the Communist Party since 1930, since they began [communicating?] the position of the Soviet Union, of the popular fronts...

[Tom mentions the prevalence of agricultural production at the time.] Yes, that was linked to the fact that agricultural production is seen as feudal, capitalists were always confused with landowners. They have a relationship with workers of personal dependency, something that in Latin America were very exposed because the concrete forms were... a lot of personal subordination.

So, the discussion of the modes of production in Latin America is an abstract discussion. What one has to look at when looking at a historical development is what concrete forms the organization of this process is presenting. And this process of conquest and development of production, of the organization proper to the conquest that follows, it is commercial capital and usurious capital that comes to America, not the feudal lords. We all know the fables about what Columbus wanted: he was a representative of commercial capital, he was looking to reach the east to trade. With the particularity that what he finds in America is a use value that for the native American societies had a symbolic value, and for commercial and usurious capital that is money for the world market. And what they do is appropriate everything they can, and then they put that native population, which also came from societies of ties of personal dependence, to produce gold and silver, and the productions that are needed to sustain this. It is not a capitalist mode of production in the abstract, but it is *one of the ways* in which the capitalist mode of production develops. And one of the questions that appears clearest is: since money is produced for the world market, the form of wages quickly appears, even for workers forced by personal dependence.

So, if I have to look at that, I could say that the capitalist mode of production arrived in America in 1492, and I would be saying an absolute abstraction. The incipient forms of its development arrive, but they are not yet those that give unity to the process of social metabolism, which is still given by bonds of personal dependence, and even in the production of silver, what will govern are the relations of personal dependence, put to work for the production of money for the world market. And one has to unfold this movement. And you can't date that. When is the fullness of the capitalist mode of production? It is emerging from that movement. It is almost like when the exteriority of when one is of legal age is raised: nothing, it is an individual who is transforming. From a certain point one can say that one has developed these and these other attributes, but while it is developing, it is and it is not.

Tomás: While gold and silver were arriving in Europe, with the inflation that existed, the tenants were taking away a significant percentage of capital from the feudal lords, and that's where capitalism developed a little more in Europe. Is it a more concrete analysis to go that way?

JIC: That would be one more analysis... I know more or less what one learns about history in general about Europe.

Tomás: I remember that I saw this in the original accumulation.

JIC: Then historians fight a lot about whether this is a more general phenomenon or not. But now I come to the other part of what you had proposed: [capital] is a subject, it is a social relation, a way of organizing the process of human life, which means how each member of society is assigned what useful work he is going to do, how he is going to apply his general capacity to work in his concrete useful form, and consequently what product of social labor he is going to consume. It is a social relationship that takes the form of no personal bond. It has an objectified existence, separate from individuals, and which determines the consciousness and will of individuals. When one looks at capital, it is a body that has to spend and transform itself materially, take from its environment objects into which it has to transform itself, consume those objects productively and produce itself multiplied. That is what a subject does, and it is what Marx means by which capital is as if it had a soul in its body. And then he repeatedly uses the term "subject", because it is a way of organizing life that does what is proper to a living subject.

The organization of human life does not have as its immediate purpose the production of human life, but the multiplied production of this objectified social relation. The subject is always human beings, it is the process of human life, but what immediately governs the life of that subject is not the reproduction of human life: it is as if it had displaced in another subject the immediate purpose for which it is set in motion. Since it is a social relation, from which all personal attributes are absent, and has an objectified existence separate from individuals, it needs to be extended to the fullest possible extent. And that is why the capitalist mode of production is not born as a universal unit, but ends up engendering itself as a universal unit, because there is no personal barrier that can limit it in its potentialities. So that is why one poses it as a subject, and what is in front of you is not simply a figure: it is a way of operating a social relationship. What people do is respond to this way of organizing social life, and that is why we are personifications of capital.

It is horrible, but it is better to recognize oneself in what one is, and not to delude oneself that one is something that one is not, and that responds to the "negative" needs, so to speak, of that objectified subject that is capital, because it is a necessity of that object – at least, historically at this point – not to recognize oneself in this determination as personification. The capitalists... The landlords, even worse, call themselves "the countryside," which is to recognize themselves as the personification of a thing. But from the point of view of the political action of the working class, not recognizing oneself as a personification and believing

oneself to be a free individual by nature is a mutilation of the force that one has as a political and historical subject.

What is going to appear in what Marx proposed about the empowerment of the collective worker at the expense of the individual worker? What I had already proposed is that this is presented as powers of capital. And every time he develops concrete forms of production of relative surplus value, he will say that this process has a double character. It is a historical progress, the development of the productive forces, a necessary stage in the "economic process of the formation of society," but it is all this under the capitalist form, and under this it is presented as a process of production of relative surplus value that sweeps away any barrier that can oppose it, and — I will put it in these terms — the destruction that this form of human life implies. It is a means of civilized and refined exploitation. And this contrast will continue to appear until Volume 3, one must always see it as the unity of these two things, and one cannot reduce it to one thing or the other as if it had no other content. In other words, this content takes this brutal form that is the capitalist mode of production.

[Alejandro comments on this duality, that formal logic tends to stay with one or the other, making apologetic or catastrophist proposals].

JIC: Yes, this content and its form have no place within formal logic. Because it is a form that in a lot of manifestations denies the development of the productive forces, for example when it mutilates the attributes of the individual worker (we will see many more later). It encloses a content under a specific historical form, which has a specific historical potentiality for the development of that content, but which the form carries within itself at the same time the negation of its content: it is not the immediate, simple, positive development of its content, it is a development strongly contradictory with respect to its content.

Let's continue to move forward with the division of labor in manufacturing. Here we are at the height of the synthesis of that deployment, what limitations it has and how it can be overcome. Here the development of labor productivity is sustained by strength, by the manual skill of the worker. Marx is going to focus on the limits implied to capital by this dependence on the manual skill of the worker. The machine of manufacture is this sum in a collective body of workers who are partially involved in production. And he will emphasize that insofar as the march of production depends on the subjectivity of the worker, and the worker has an antagonistic relationship with the capitalist as the representative of capital, the worker can assert the intervention of his subjectivity by disturbing or stopping the development of the labor process. And so manual labor gives a weapon to the collective worker of the division of labor in manufacturing with respect to the capitalist.

I am going to expand on this. The fact that the quality of work, the speed with which work is done, depends on the subjectivity of the worker, raises a barrier to the development of the productivity of labor that is not specifically proper to the

capitalist mode of production, does not arise from the antagonistic relationship between capitalist and worker, but springs from the determinations of the same human subjectivity. I am going to emphasize two types of limitation that human subjectivity has with respect to the development of the productive forces of manual labor. [**2**] A human subject is not always in the same physical and mental conditions. [**1**] But he also has physical and intellectual limitations[170] to perform certain jobs. There is an absolute limitation here.

[**1**] For a given task, if manual skill is needed, you can have the most skilled worker in the world, but there is only one of them; then you have to settle for workers with less skill, you cannot increase the productivity of that work any more by applying more force. A human being cannot breathe in an environment loaded with a toxic gas, and therefore cannot work directly in a job in which a toxic gas continuously emanates (later the reality is that it can, and so the worker who works in these conditions dies, but these absolute limitations appear). A worker cannot breathe under water, he cannot work under it in a sustained way. And these are limitations that arise from the fact that it is a living being that has certain attributes.

[**2**] But the other limitation is that a human subject is not always the same: there are days when he may be more tired, with more strength, with more skill, with less spirit... And this is going to be translated into the material process of manual labor even though the worker is not using it as a weapon against the capitalist. An example: a worker has to adjust some nuts, and he could not sleep well the night before, or he is sick, he feels discouraged... He tightens the nut with little force and production fails. Another euphoric wine because his football team won, he came with too much energy, he tightens the screws too much and breaks them.

There is a characteristic technical feature of manual labor that springs from this variability of human subjectivity, whether intentional or not, which is that quality control can only be done after it has been worked; it cannot be done beforehand because it is not known what is going to happen to the subjectivity of that individual in that production process. You can only know what happened next. And if it could not apply the normal technical conditions that are necessary for production, either part of the production was lost late or more work has to be applied to correct what failed.

We find ourselves with this double determination, and since the worker has an antagonistic relationship with capital, he can squeeze loosely or hard to demonstrate to the capitalist that the valorization of his capital depends on the subjectivity of the worker. Then a barrier appears to the development of labor productivity that arises from this mediation of the subjectivity of the individual handling the tool. And even if the workers were all submissive and did everything the capitalist wanted, and could always work with the same quality and speed, and so on, the capitalist needs to overcome the barrier he imposes on the development of the productivity of labor and consequently on the production of relative surplus value, the direct intervention of the worker's subjectivity in the material labor

[170] I mark the two limitations backwards because they are set out in reverse order in what follows.

process. He needs to get the tool out of the worker's hands. [...] Marx goes on to close the development of the chapter by saying that in this simplification of manual work, the reduction to a mechanical movement allows machinery to be incorporated. And with the machine (he anticipates it) he is going to put an end to all manual activity as a norm within social production. Two things are going to happen: the technical basis on which the worker is tied for life to a partial task is going to disappear, and "it is going to tear down the dams that the same principle opposed to the empire of capital."

[Tomás says that taking the tool away from him "dehumanizes" the work]

This contradiction appears: if the substitution of human subjectivity in manual labor were to liberate the human being in his capacities to transcend in the development of what Marx is going to call "his generic human being", then it would be welcome. The problem is that it is *at* the expense of that other development. It is not that it frees the human being from having to be doing the activity (I am going to put it in very general terms) doing the same thing that an animal can do, in order to be able to start doing what an animal cannot do, which is to produce with its consciousness. This occurs in a capitalist form, and it is not for the human being to develop his generic being, to exercise his consciousness as a way of reproducing his condition as a natural subject, making the natural forces act as extensions of his body, let's say. It is so that the individual loses the ability he had to organize his work as an artisan (he had to think to organize it). Now his only movement is to move his arm from front to back because he has to adjust a nut, etc. I put it that way but it needs development so that it does not lend itself to misunderstandings. But this is what you have in front of you.

[Matías asks about political economy, if it was born in the period of manufacture from the movement of capital, and about its ideological role].

The answer to that was what I developed not last Saturday, but on the previous Saturday, in what I had been invited to from the East Center of Criticism and Science[171], because it was exactly about the historical character of political economy. I try to summarize.

When Marx speaks of political economy, in some places he says that it is the science of the bourgeoisie, and then it has no "future." Elsewhere, the consciousness of the personifications of capital appears as a generic knowledge, as if it were not specific to the capitalist mode of production. From my point of view, in the first place, the proposals of disciplinary fragmentation fragment the unity of the social relationship. And when it fragments, naturalization is inevitable. This is what we saw in the workshop: only if one unfolds that this is a relation between persons that has the form of no relation between persons, between things, and the fact that it has that form determines the consciousness and will of the commodity owners as personifications of the commodities who enter into such a condition in a

[171] "The Character of Political Economy and the Naturalization of Free Consciousness," on the channel of the Center for Critical and Science Studies: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUCJ4-ipwHw.

direct conscious and voluntary relation (legal relations) and then one unfolds all the forms as relations policies and so on... When one cuts into the field of the study of political economy, which is the realm of commodity exchange (to take it in the simplest form), one does not have the possibility of recognizing the consciousness and will of the commodity owners as personifications, and then appears to them as naturally free. Political economy stops there.

Why does it appear as a science that is not of the unity of the social relation? When sociology, politics or any of these cuts backwards, because it cuts only the relations between personifications, the same thing happens to them, naturally free consciences appear to them that have antagonistic relationships, opposing interests and that is why they confront each other. So, the fact that Marx gave his works the title "The Critique of Political Economy"... And when it did not, it appeared in sociology as a discipline, where political science did not appear as a discipline... It confronts me with the question and it appears to me—even more so, when it is clear that this knowledge can be fragmented—that this is a form of fetishistic consciousness. It is a scientific consciousness... Later, in neoclassical economics one can ask oneself to what extent an objective consciousness is, because it is incoherent with itself, classical economics to a certain extent too, but neoclassical and Austrian economics clash with their own proposals. Marx in the notebooks of 1844 speaks in one place that at some point there will be only one science, the science of humanized nature, or human natural history or something like that, he gives two references. And for me that's what one has to aim for.

For me it doesn't matter where you started from. Because the training structure inevitably means that one has to start with some fragment. At a certain point in development one has to forget why it started: one has to look at that social relationship in its unity. If not, it ends up mutilating the thing, and the first thing that appears is naturalization. I have a point of view that starting with political economy has an advantage because one starts with the content, and then it is easier to move on to the way to realize that content. When you start with the other clippings of science, you have the difficulty that you saw the form as if it were the content and then you have to incorporate the content. But nothing, each one grabs it where they can grab it, where it arises, where they are the bearer of the need to grab it, but ultimately there is a point at which one has to erase the limits of whether it is this or that, because the problem is to face unity. I return to what I planted, which was the critique of critical political economy, which ceased to be the object of criticism and became the subject, but how does it criticize? And he ends up criticizing on the same basis as classical and neoclassical political economy, which is the naturalization of the condition of the free individual (e.g. Rubin and the Ricardians like Sraffa).

[Matías says that he does not quite weave together the relationship with the *emergence* of political economy from the manufacturing division of labor.]

First I make a clarification. I do not know what is called "history of economic thought", I am not a scholar by any means; what I know is from Smith onwards, and the references that Marx makes to Petty and others (the physiocrats, mercantilists) I had to learn. I even have a book by Greek and Roman economists

lying around, which at some point I was intended to study and which I never read. But from what Marx quotes from Aristotle, there appears the problem of the economy. And I don't know if the term... because etymologically it comes from the Greek, long before the period of manufacture. What one can say is that it is the science of the capitalist mode of production. Because when Marx looks at Aristotle and why he says that there must be a common substance that is manifested in change but he cannot find it because he lives in a society where individuals are not equal, what he sees are slaves and masters, and then he cannot think of the existence of human labor as such. So, in previous modes of production, where there is commodity production (but they are not the commodities we are looking at and much less the commodities that are the product of capital, which are the ones we are looking at now)... To the extent that there is a movement for the autonomous regulation of the unity between production and social consumption, since this needs a management that gives it unity, it is clear that the question must arise as to what this relationship that is developing is.

Now, two things: where the commodity appears, capital in its fullness as a general social relation that carries with it the need to advance in the development of the productive forces of social labor, where at the same time there is now no longer direct unity in the process of social life... Because in Greek society there is the production of commodities but there is the direct unity of the structure of bonds... it is not a primitive community by any means, but whose members are the members of that society. And this is only dissolved with the capitalist mode of production. Then the need to manage the total capital of the company appears. And in fact, I don't know Petty (he was a doctor, but I don't know what...), but political economy was born to organize the action of the state. Smith starts with the development he does because he wants to explain to himself what action the state has to take, no matter how much he says that it is better for no one to say that he pursues the general interest, but then the management problems appear. Ricardo's work is principles of political economy and taxation, it is a problem of management of the total capital of society. So, it is a science that can only be fully developed in the capitalist mode of production, it is its own science. In the previous modes of production, questions and problems may arise about how to establish unity. This can only be effectively confronted in the capitalist mode of production.

One might wonder if it is also a problem of industrial capital. While merchant's capital and usurious capital are the main forms of capital, it is a period in which national unity is still given by relations of personal dependence, by monarchical structures, and production is regulated by these links. And unity is given by... The artisans all have their production regulated. And it is only when artisanal work is overcome, with the development of the division of labor in manufacturing, that there are no more direct personal ties that play a central role. And so this scientific awareness needs to be developed to manage the total capital of society.

Until a point arrives, which is what Marx says about Germany in particular – but which is the same as what happens in the rest of the world – where the need to manage the total capital of society is made clear that what it has to do is a management that has to have a strong ideological content. even at the expense of the ability to manage. Because it is clear that Ricardo's explanation allows us to

understand what is happening to the movement of the total capital of society much better than that of the neoclassical economists who kick themselves with the movements of capital.

It is a question that I raise a lot in courses where there are people who are not training to be economists, but public accountants or graduates in administration: neoclassical economics makes it impossible to learn business accounting objectively. Ideological necessity appears imposing itself on an individual who has to learn objective knowledge to reflect the movement of capital, and cannot dominate it because the ideological foundation is the opposite of what he has to manage. Then that transformation appears with respect to the ability to appropriate the unity of what happens. Later, neoclassical economics is going to develop a lot of external relations of measurement between different concrete forms and it is going to manage, it doesn't know why that relationship is but... It's the same as any other model-based scientific knowledge: you don't know why that's so, but if you operate on this quantitative measure you have such an effect. Then back to it: there is no longer any place for a political economy other than that.

There is one more thing that I do not want to forget and I want to make clear. When Marx makes this proposal that science is separated from the process of production, of work, and becomes a power that capital appropriates, the relationship between capital accumulation and science will be posed in what follows. And since we are first going to follow the development that Marx makes, we are going to get there, and then we will look at it again and it does not appear in that development who is the concrete subject of science. It appears that it is someone else's knowledge, that it costs capital nothing... But it is never defined who the subject is. Then we can discuss why it does not appear in Marx's development, when he is going to make a reference to society in general, and is even opposed to the working class.

[Matías asks why Marx contrasts the needs of capitalist society in the period of manufacture, centered on quantity and exchange value, and in classical antiquity on quality, on producing better use values.]

Capital is value that is valorized, social labor is set in motion to produce surplus value. The only thing that can be of interest from the point of view of this science of the movement of capital is the quantitative question: there is no qualitative difference, or the only thing that exists is a quantitative difference. In other forms of society where the social relation does not aim to be the immediate bearer of the production of value, what stands out is its use value, the problem of what is materially what is going to be produced. In the capitalist mode of production, put in very crude terms, it is indifferent what each one is going to produce. And if we look at neoclassical political economy, it has never been explained why something is a use value (I'm wondering if in classical economics later on there is a different thing...). Smith barely scratches this by saying that there are things that have a lot of use value but little "exchange value" and others that have very little or no use value and a high exchange value. But what they want to answer is why they have exchange value, not why they have high or low use value. But this is how one

chapter ends and the next begins, which is exchange value. I would associate it with that issue.

[Matthias asks how Marx attributes to Plato and others that he already intuited the foundation of the separation of society into classes in the division of labor, while in manufacturing the social separation is generalized with a fragmented working class, in which the social productive force seems to be an external power that belongs to capital and its personification in the capitalist. "What determinations are involved here? Does the division of labor necessarily carry the division between classes?"]

JIC: It was not very clear to me, because there is the reference to "classes appearing *among the workers*"... I don't have in mind.

Matías: I was struck by the fact that Plato said that the foundation of the separation of classes was in the division of labor, and I wondered if this transcends a specific period, if this division of labor implies that classes have to be divided or if that was an element that generates the division between classes...

JIC: I would have to think about it more to see if he is talking about social classes or some other type of classification.

Matías: Yes, of course, I was referring more to the caste system that is proposed in the *Republic*. Marx says:

> [...] This view of use value is the one that predominates both in Plato, who sees in the division of labor the foundation of social separation into classes, and in Xenophon, who with his characteristic bourgeois instinct already approaches the division of labor within a workshop. The Platonic republic, insofar as in it the division of labor figures as the formative principle of the state, is nothing more than the *Athenian idealization of the Egyptian caste system*.[172]

JIC: Yes... I don't think I could answer you because I don't know what Plato says. What appears there are two divisions of labor that are completely different. In very rough terms: in one there is an individual who produces a full use-value, and in the other what is present is that no individual produces a full use-value.

We were done with the chapter on the division of labor in manufacturing. Is there anything you want to raise?

[Edgardo asks if it is not contradictory to what Marx had established that he says that simple cooperation is the basic form of capitalist production, with respect to the first chapter where the simplest determination of the capitalist mode of production is social labor carried out privately and independently. Or if simply that it is "the basic form" must be understood in another way].

[172] Marx, K. (2009: 445-46), *Capital*, Volume 1, vol. 2. Mexico: Siglo XXI editores.

They are references to two different aspects or issues. When he starts by saying that in societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails, wealth is presented as an immense accumulation of commodities, and then the commodity develops, then one knows the commodity as something that is in the capitalist mode of production and that it is a product of labor. We continue to advance and now we know the commodity as a product of capital. And one can say: we actually met her in the absolute surplus value section. Why would Marx refer to simple cooperation as the basic form?

We start with the purity of private and independent social labour: it is the commodity producer who has full control over his individual labour, has no control over the social character of his labour, and is the private owner of his means of production. That is the absolute purity of private labor. What happens from chapter IV onwards is that this purity began to dissolve, or to develop contradictorily. The first step when one looks at the chapters of the production of absolute surplus value, where there is no reference to whether the worker works alone or not, what does appear is that the worker no longer has full control over his individual labor: he works under the control of the capitalist, who no longer has the full exercise of the individual production process. That subject that one had at the beginning is now a fragmented social subject, made up of two separate individuals. And it is the first step in the development of the socialization of private labor.

Up to that point, all we had was: this is capitalist work because of the way it's organized. The capitalist is the one who manages the organization of production. But what is characteristic of capitalist production, when one continues to advance, is that the very materiality of the production process has a social character, and it is the next step in the socialization of private labor. And so, if *formally* one saw the capitalist organization of labor when one looked at absolute surplus value, one *really* only sees it when one begins with cooperation. Because it is a production that needs, by the same relationship that governs it (unlike the work of the simple producer of commodities), to have an increasingly social character within it. So the first way is that they are simply all put in the same place at the same time, but each one does the same work that he would have done if he were alone, and yet out of that being together springs a social productive force. But individual capital also has to grow in order to continue extending simple cooperation. So there is the double process. When cooperation comes to the case where everyone works on the same commodity body, it is no longer the product of individual labour, it has disappeared, it is now the product of social labour, and of an ever larger social body.

Then we no longer have the simple purity of private labor: it is a private labor that contains within it the negation of the private character of work, because it is social labor. Outwardly it is still private labour, but inwardly each time, because of the transformations of cooperation and the division of labour in manufacturing, and because of the scale that each individual capital has to have, each time what is enclosed is social labour... Where Marx's observation appeared that the ideologues who are fascinated by the division of labor in manufacturing are indignant when it is proposed that we make an immediately social organization of all labor, not only

within each private unit. So, it is not a contradiction, but the development of what he could only discover by looking at private labor as a form of social labor in purity. Because now what he is seeing is what happens in his own movement to this way of organizing social labor. So the commodity, which when we began the relationship it had with capital is that it is in the capitalist mode of production, now we know more and more as a product of capital. And as such, it seemed that it could be the product of individual work but no, it is necessarily the product of collective work.

In absolute surplus value there is the socialization of labor but separating who directs and who executes. But what is going to appear is that it is not simply a formal, managerial problem (in the penultimate chapter the reminiscences of this will appear). When we go a little further, in the chapter that closes this section on absolute surplus value and relative surplus value, which is the difference between the formal subsumption and the real subsumption of the worker in labor in capital... When he arrives at primitive accumulation and looks at his axis, there is first a reference to a *formal change*. I am going to put it in terms that are not, and I am going to get ahead of myself, but it refers to how work is organized, who has the power to organize work (it goes far beyond that); instead, it is going to propose what is *really* happening here, and it is that transformation of the materiality of the labor process when it becomes a process of collective work.

So, the *form* of labor subsumed in capital is already in absolute surplus value, but what is proper to the capitalist organization of that labor from the material point of view of that process only appears when one is confronted with the production of relative surplus value and the first step is simple cooperation. where for the first time there is a transformation in the very materiality of the production process. If I remember correctly, Marx does not yet speak there of the collective worker, I do incorporate it there to emphasize that we are advancing in a socialization of private labor.

[Javiera asks why speak of collective worker in simple cooperation]

JIC: Because a first subject of the labor process appears that has the character of a collective subject. All the more so when they all work on the same use-value, because there it is a collective, although undifferentiated within itself, but even in simple cooperation, the productive force of that labor springs from its collective character. […] For me one can already speak of a collective worker.

Javiera: But, in simple cooperation, does the worker already carry within himself attributes that allow him to participate in different functions of the production process?

JIC: No, they all do the same thing, but from the fact that they are working together a productive force emerges that they do not have separately. So it is that body that has that productive force.

Javiera: I thought that the collective worker appeared at the moment when he carried within himself attributes that allowed him to participate in any part of the process, this would be earlier.

JIC: Yes. In Marx the term appears with the factory worker, but for me there is already one. This is the point at which the proper character of labor for capital appears.

Chapter XIII. Machinery and large industry.

We are going to enter from the division of labor in manufacturing [to the chapter of machinery]. The transition is open when the simplification of all movement to a specialized mechanical movement appears, where the production of work instruments for the manufacture itself appears in manufacturing, how the production of mechanical apparatus arises, and the step that follows that, overcoming the barrier proper to the division of manual labor that was the subjectivity of the worker in the handling of the tool. and how manufacturing itself creates the conditions for the development of machinery and large-scale industry. We had raised the reference that it allows overcoming the technical condition that tied the worker to a partial task for life, and what is happening in the subsequent development of the capitalist mode of production with the acceleration of the technical change typical of the development of machinery, and with the prolongation of the life of the worker.

1. Development of machinery.

Let's go into the development that Marx is going to make on machinery. And what is going to appear is a modification in the labor process, because the tool becomes a machine: it leaves the hands of the human subject and becomes part of a mechanism. I make a clarification that has to do with the technical or material condition of the work. Why this difference between the tool and the mechanism as a whole? Because the tool is what operates directly on the object of work. When one speaks of manual work it is clear, but when one speaks of a machine, the tool is not the lathe, but the milling head that the lathe has, it is what immediately operates on the object of work and has become part of a mechanism. In this respect it will appear that the worker has two arms, but cannot wield two tools at the same time, the number of tools that the same machine can handle overcomes – and this was one of the obstacles to the development of the productive forces in the division of labor in manufacturing – the limitations of an organic character that arise from the structure of a human body. This is the first step: a number of tools can be handled that escape any possibility of handling by a human being in manual work.

The next step that will appear is that Marx is going to contrast what the machine is and what is the motive force that moves it. The force with which the tool operates as part of the mechanism is still subordinated to human subjectivity, but then the development of a machine capable of producing force appears, whose function is to provide force for the other machines to operate, and now all limitation (in absolute terms) that arises from the organic character of the human being has disappeared: There is no limit to strength, skill, tools that can be handled at the same time. But the problem is not an isolated machine: what we are going to have in front of us is a system of machinery, each of these machines (taken in very simple terms) specialized in a partial task. But all the movement of the tools that transform the objects of work are now movements of a mechanical nature. So, what appeared in the division of labor in manufacturing as a power of social labor

capable of operating the productivity of any isolated individual labor, and which appeared as a power of capital, not of the workers, now appears separated from the workers even *materially*, because it is a power of the system of machinery. And what appeared to replace these partial workers is a system of partial machines.

What is happening with respect to the person of the worker? Those skills and specialized knowledge that they had as a personal attribute of theirs, now appear as capabilities of machines. Here is something that I raised before that is mentioned but is not displayed in the text and I am going to expand on it: manual work is a skill that can only be acquired by working, it cannot be acquired "theoretically", because it depends on the subjectivity of the individual with what strength, skill and so on he has to work. The workers of manufacture, however degraded they may be tied to a partial task, still come in their person with that capacity to organize their work. For the machinery system, knowledge has to have an objective character, because the natural forces with which the tool is going to move must be controlled.

The knowledge acquired in the labor process itself, as the tool is not handled, ceased to fulfill the role it had in manual work. Then the need for objective knowledge, science and the application of technology appears. And Marx states that this revolutionizes science and technology itself, because just as the evolution of machinery and its own use requires technical knowledge to reach machinery, the power that the use of machinery gives to human labor requires continuous progress in the development of that objective knowledge.

We continue to see the developments that machinery is having, of the entire organization of production, and just as you are talking about the qualitative transformation of machinery and the knowledge to develop it, what appears is the quantitative question, of the proportion that the body of the system of machines must keep, among the machines specialized in different partial tasks.

[Alejandro asks if proportionality is like in the division of labor in manufacturing.]

JIC: Yes, only now it's not a problem of combining individual workers with different partial tasks, and now it's a problem of combining machines. Again, if a machine takes twice as long to do a process as it does to do another of the partial processes, then you have to have two of these machines that take twice as long for each machine through which the product flows without the obstacle of having to stay longer.

Alejandro: And that relationship of proportionality is "stronger" because the machine has to operate continuously, there is no subject in the middle that can regulate the flow of the work object immediately, right?

JIC: Yes, but in reality this happens: if the subjectivity of the manual worker is a barrier, the capitalist is in charge of trying to make the thing flow by coercing the worker. It is clear that with machinery the proportionalities between the different tasks can be regulated much more, because it is not that there is one machine that

is more skilled than the other... So, in a system of machinery where there are five machines that do the same thing, the feed to the machine that follows is going to be much more regular. But in reality it is the projection of the need to provide the various partial organs of this system of machinery, which can be done more finely. Which does not mean that the machine can also fail. If it is known regularly that a machine fails, you must have spare machines to replace the one that failed and be able to continue with production in a continuous way.

Alejandro: Even entire days scheduled annually, weekly...

JIC: Yes, precisely so that there is no out-of-control production cut.

Javiera: I was stuck with this objective knowledge in the machinery system.

JIC: Yes. I'm going to take it to the point where it's posed by Marx and then I'm going to come back. In manual work, knowledge is carried in the subjectivity of the individual who handles the tool, and it can only be acquired and developed by executing the work. If I have a saw for cutting wood, the most they can do is explain to me that I should put my teeth against the wood and not grab the saw by the blade because I am going to cut myself. So you have to start cutting, and you think you are doing it straight but a snake comes out instead of a straight line, etc., and one day the individual has his eyes covered, he is given the saw and he makes a perfect cut, because in his subjectivity is the knowledge of his full handling. With machinery, that knowledge does not work. Since the machine has the objective of controlling a series of natural forces that are going to be automatically unloaded on the tool, the control of these forces has to have an objective character. Natural forces are controlled by knowing how they operate objectively. If I have to manufacture a mechanical saw, the problem is to know what resistance the wood offers to the passage of the saw with a certain type of teeth, so that the saw cuts the wood and does not break it. As much as I know it through trial and error, it is objective knowledge. And Marx states that the machine is used and that allows us to take a step beyond what had been done with the construction of the machine.

With experience in using the machine, you have to ask yourself again about the objective control... [...][173]. I was going to take an absurd example: I cut the wood with the saw. As I go through that and need a more refined cut, I have to ask myself how it's done, how it can be controlled, better adjust the movement of the blade, measure the speed more accurately. So I have to revolutionize or change what I knew about how speed is measured. The classic example is the transition from classical physics to quantum mechanics: at a certain point you have to measure with such precision that the basis you had with the mechanics of classical physics can no longer differentiate things that need to be differentiated. So the very development of the application of scientific knowledge generates the need for new scientific knowledge.

Marx continues with the question of proportionality, of the substitution of the skills of living labor by the "skills" objectified in machinery, the continuous

[173] Cut in the recording.

character of the production process, he speaks again of the natural sciences... And now the very structure of the machinery system imposes the necessity for the worker who operates the machinery to be a collective worker. It is no longer that the very "body" of the collective worker springs from the design of the collective worker: now it is from the system of machinery that the character of the collective worker as such, his design, springs. […][174]

Pedro: I was thinking about when you talked about the subject of objective knowledge... And let's say, that objective knowledge is conventional physics, mathematics, and ends up using conventional theory and logic. So I wonder if there comes a point in development when the system of machinery itself shows that this form of knowledge has a limit and it is set by dialectical knowledge.

JIC: Marx at no time says that they are the natural sciences, physics and chemistry, without discussing what method they have. I propose that just as when we return to the development of what transformations occur in the labor process beyond what Marx proposed, who is the subject that produces that objective knowledge (Marx is going to make references but exclude someone without saying who the subject is). I propose that we stop having advanced in the development of the method on the concrete object in front of us (capital), that we start looking at the forms of scientific knowledge.

Edgardo: When we come back to this, will we also see the full historical development? The question, for example, of the NDIT...[175]

JIC: No, we are not going to look at historical development. What we are going to look at is who is the subject of that science. Marx says again: capital appropriates the knowledge of others, the "product of society" (it has some term beyond the "product of society"), and we will see what he says about capitalists. And we are going to ask ourselves who is the subject of that science, what happens to the materiality of work with the development of a form of work that until now has not appeared as work, what is known as "intellectual work" (the term does not make me very happy). We are going to look at the method, but the other would take us completely out, because to look at the so-called NDIT, we would have to answer ourselves about the national forms of capital accumulation, something that is not even developed in Volume 3, we are very far from that. We would have to develop a series of questions that are in Volume 3 and that make up the concrete forms of the movement of capital and that we do not have before us either. Then it would be very outwardly that one could look at those questions.

Javiera: When Marx makes the distinction between the cooperation of many similar machines and the system of machines, why does he make it? Because I understand that he does it to say that the machinery system is something that comes after simple cooperation but with different machines, and that there is also a continuity of a process between one and the other.

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[174] Cut in the recording.
[175] New international division of labor.

JIC: I don't think I dwelt on a question in the division of labor in manufacturing where Marx makes the reference that even in manufacturing simple cooperation subsists. When one takes the example of the manual assembly line, there are 5 assembly lines in parallel, there are 5 workers who perform the same task each on their line, and they are in simple cooperation with each other. And here what you were proposing is the parallel with that: one thing is the machines that all do the same thing—which is equivalent to the process of simple cooperation—and the system of machinery is combined machinery, an organic unity in the sense of... It's like each of the assembly lines, those are in that process of cooperation where each machine has a certain partial task.

Javiera: I don't know if we understood each other, he gives the example of the letters, of the envelopes that first a machine folds one part, another another... And then a machine comes along that synthesizes all these functions in itself.

JIC: That's how it is and it is not like that. Because it depends on each technical process. And I give an example that I found out about by talking to people who are in the technical part of this. It is an indirect example, but when the robotization processes begin, there is a motor that makes all the movements of the mechanical arm. And at a certain height that one machine that does all the movement is replaced by small motors that are placed in each joint. And it may also happen that there are processes that were previously done in a single machine and that there are also machines that are specialized due to the degree of precision of the tasks it performs, which is fragmented into different machines. So, I don't know if there is a process of transformation of various machines that do partial tasks into one, and that there are no processes the other way around. That would have to be seen if it is a universal movement or not. That's all I could say.

2. Transfer of value from machinery to product.

Let's start section 2. One may wonder why Marx followed the order he follows but, again, it would be a purely speculative answer, so I take it as it comes. What now appears to be typical of the machine... It was mentioned in the chapter when one looked at the labour-process and the process of valorisation, and in the transfer of value of constant capital, there was already the question of how the value of machinery reappears in the value of the product. But what Marx is going to deploy in this is not simply the transfer of value, but the productive forces that are born of cooperation, of the division of labor, appear again, and Marx is going to say: this does not cost capital anything. What it costs capital is the value of the labour power of the individual workers. The productive powers that spring from the collective character of labor, capital does not have to pay for because the value of labor power has nothing to do with this question. And the natural forces that it appropriates for the production processes do not cost it anything either. And here some things are going to appear that cause me some doubts.

The question of science returns (that is, the appropriation of natural forces in the productive processes) and he is going to state that it costs the capitalist

"nothing" (it appears in quotation marks[176]), that he can exploit it and that he appropriates the science of others, no more and no less than he appropriates the work of others. And he will distinguish between what he calls "capitalist appropriation" and the "personal appropriation" of both science and material wealth. And he is going to quote a certain Dr. Ure, whom he is going to describe as the Pindar of English manufacturers, who recognizes that capitalists who use machinery have no idea about mechanics, in personal terms they are absolutely ignorant. And he quotes a certain Liebig who says that the English capitalists in the chemical industry do not know a word about chemistry. But here that this gratuitous appropriation of alien science appeared, it did not appear who is the producer of that alien science. Because science is contrasted with work, it does not appear as a product of work. It is clear that the capitalist does not have that scientific subjectivity, but it is not defined who is the subject of that science.

Javiera: Why does it say "nothing" in quotation marks?

JIC: When you go to say about natural forces, it will appear that natural force does not cost anything. It does cost to develop the machine that has built-in control of these natural forces. But in addition, the machine has the control of a natural force that is made to operate entirely every time it is used. But how much does he transfer value, how much does it cost the capitalist to make use of the machine? Just the little piece that wore out. So, it has a natural strength that it can fully use in every production process, but every production process costs it a little bit. I sometimes find doubts and sometimes not when I look at this chapter. Why this statement that it costs him "nothing"? One would have to ask Marx. It appears as a caveat, but I could not say it strictly.

[II]

Capital appropriates these forces of nature "gratuitously", etc. But in view of this, it appears that in order to be able to set these productive forces in motion, the ability to control natural forces must be objectified in machinery. And now, from this process what emerges is that if these forces that are objectified in the machinery, which is constant capital, dead labor, which does not create value, but transfers its value to that of the product as the material process of production consumes the use value. So what is going to happen is: why does the individual capitalist increase the productivity of the labor of his workers? To diminish the value of his commodities so that he can sell them below the social value and above the individual value and obtain an extraordinary surplus value. And up to this point, the two previous forms of development of the productivity of labor simply decreased the amount of living labor incorporated into the commodity, and nothing happened with the amount of dead labor, it remained the same as before, because it was basically raw materials and auxiliary materials. And now with the development of machinery, what is happening is that a new source has appeared that transfers value to the product.

[176] See footnote 23 in Marx, K. (1977: 316), *Capital*, Vol. 1. Mexico City: FCE.

The more the machinery system is developed, the more value there is of the mass of machinery to be transferred to the product. The question is: what happens with this incorporation of value to the product, which instead of making it cheaper? How much value does it transfer to you? It does not transfer its full value to it once it is used, but *gradually*. The more times the machine can be used in the production process, the smaller the value it transfers to the product, and it will make it less expensive. So this separation is going to appear here: the machine is worth $100 but every time it is used it is going to transfer — let's put — $1 to the value of the product. And therefore, you are going to use it 100 times, it is going to cost you $100, but you are going to use it 99 times "for free". The question that arises is: what is the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery, when does it make sense from the point of view of capital to implement a machine that increases the productivity of labor (decreasing the value of the commodity produced) at the expense of transferring value to the product?

There is a first answer, which is that the value transferred to the product is equal to the reduction of living labor that transfers value to the product. This will appear as if this were the limit, it makes sense to incorporate machinery when the dead labor that is added is *at least* equal to the living labor that is saved, and the value of the commodity will not change, the total mass of value. But then it will appear that this is not the *capitalist limit* to the incorporation of machinery. For from the point of view of capital, living labour is not simply living labour, but living labour paid and unpaid. The saving of unpaid living labour from the point of view of capital is not saving. If the machine transfers as much total dead labour as the living labour it saves, it has eaten up the part of the unpaid living labour, which ceases to be surplus value for the capitalist. The limit is that the value transferred by the machine to the product must be less than the value [the paid part] of the labour-power which disappears by the incorporation of the machine.

A second step will appear at this limit, because if the working day remains constant, as the productivity of labor has increased, the mass of commodities that are going to come into circulation also increases, and as the mass increases, the social need for them must grow, and in order for it to grow the price must fall. Consequently, it is not enough for the machine to save a quantity of paid living labour equal to the value which it transfers to commodities, but it must save more paid living labour in order to absorb the decrease in price due to the increase in production. So, the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery is going to go a step further, and that is that the value that is added transferred by the machinery has to be less than the paid living labor that is saved.

And with this what is going to happen is that the worker is going to be displaced by a machine that contains less work than the worker would have done if he had continued to work manually. Then, over the life of the machine, it will have displaced the worker from the labor process for longer than the labor time that was applied to building the machine. [...] That machine transfers this magnitude of value, and when one adds up the 100 uses, it added up to a quantity of labor which is equal to the sum of *paid* labor which that worker would have done if he had not been replaced by the machine. But since that worker also performed his part of the

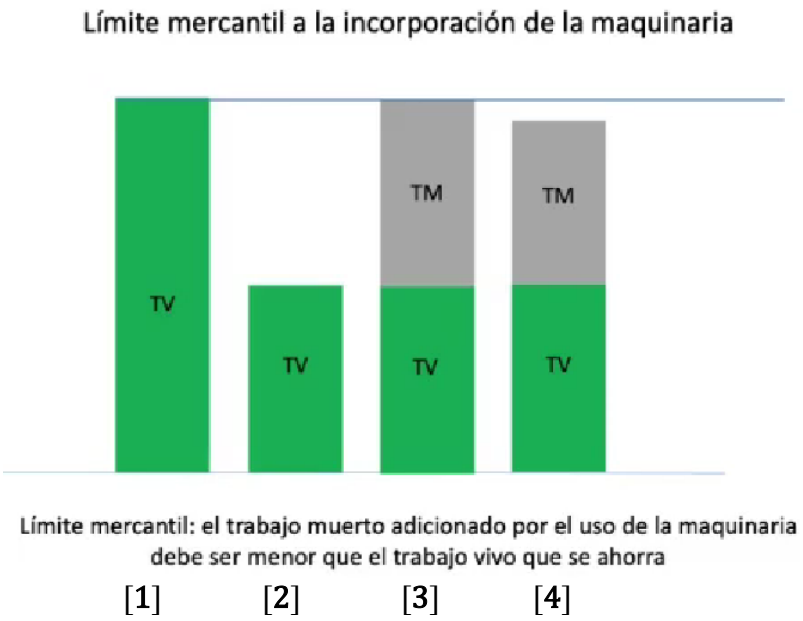
day unpaid, he has now been displaced by a machine that only contains the amount of work that his paid day entailed. Therefore, the worker is going to find — I don't want to go any further because Marx divides this into two parts — that he has been replaced by a machine that contains less work over time than he would have done if he had remained in production working manually.

So, a contradictory movement is going to appear here that Marx is going to deploy, because he is going to say: since the workers are displaced by the use of the machine... Suppose that the rate of surplus-value was 100%, half of the day was paid and the other unpaid, and the worker replaced by a machine that corresponds only to the paid part, and consequently there is a surplus for the entire unpaid part. So Marx makes an observation in this, but which does not refer to the strict movement of normality but to the concrete ways in which this is going to develop, and that is that the workers can be expelled from one branch of production by the incorporation of machinery in such proportion that when they look for a buyer for their labor power in other branches, the price at which they have to sell their labor power falls so below value that now this low wage constitutes a limitation of the incorporation of machinery into the industries to which they flowed.

Because since machinery can only be incorporated to the extent that the value it transfers to the product is less than the price of the labor power it is disputing, if it becomes cheaper because there is too much, the machine has to cost less in order to reach the limit of its incorporation. So it is more difficult to develop a machine that at the same time, costing less, has the increase in productivity that it would have if labor power were sold at its value, and is also worth less than that. This constitutes a barrier to the incorporation of machinery. And he is going to propose it with the fact that sometimes it has a transitory and an absolute character, which makes such incorporation impossible.

Then, Marx is going to bring up again the question of the source of this profit that the capitalist who incorporates the machinery is going to have, arguing that this profit does not originate in the decrease in the amount of work applied, but in the decrease in the amount of paid work. So, we came across this determination that was what happens to the transfer of value from the machine to the product.

[**Mercantile and capitalist limits to the incorporation of machinery.**]

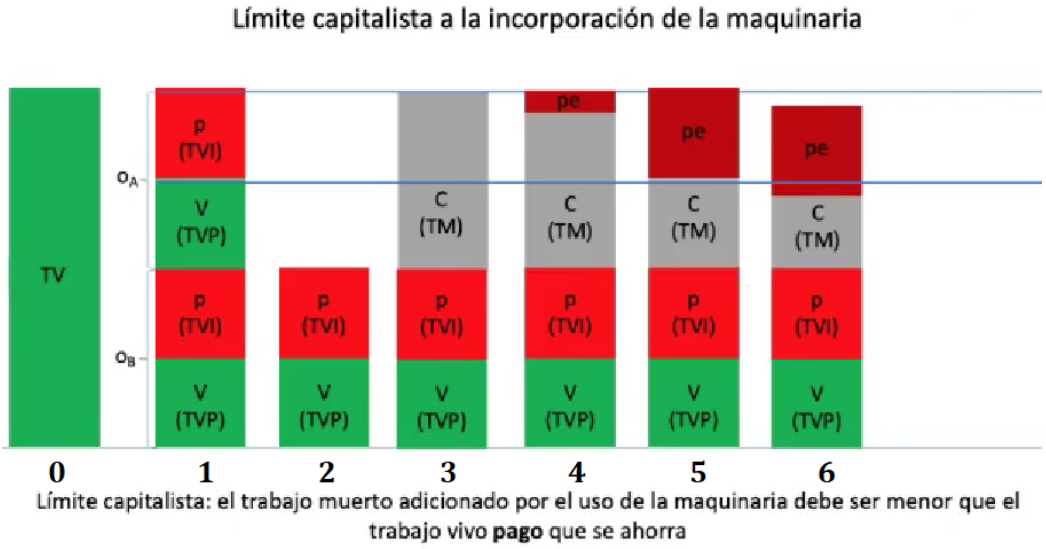


[1] We begin with this first step taken by Marx. One can see it on the one hand as a limit of a technical nature, as a general criterion of when it makes sense for a society to incorporate machinery if it could choose it rationally. Let us consider that we dispense with raw materials and auxiliary materials, and have a commodity whose value contains only materialized living labor, and that the value is the high of the stick that is green.

[2] And the possibility of doubling the productivity of work appears (the scales are not very precise but...) by incorporating machinery, transforming that manual work into machine work. The value of a unit of that commodity decreased by half because it has half the TV as before.

[3] But now it remains to add the value transferred by the machine, which we will assume to be equal to the TV that would have been expended to produce the unit of commodities. Therefore, we have a situation in which the value of that commodity did not change. Up to this point it implies that the total labor displaced from the production of this commodity by the incorporation of the machinery throughout its useful life is equal to the amount of labor it cost to produce the machinery.

[4] Here appears the aspect of the second step at the limit (it is also valid for the production of simple commodities), that if the productivity of labor has doubled, twice as many commodities now come into circulation as before. In order for the doubling of the quantity of commodities to be absorbed, the price must fall and therefore the solvent social need must increase. Then, seen from the point of view of commodity production, unless the commodity producer who incorporated the machinery and who uses it himself withdraws from production (this is totally abstract, because the simple production of commodities is not the axis of movement), in order to incorporate the machine, the TM he adds would have to be less than the TV he saves. in order to absorb the fall in the value of the commodity due to the increase in productivity. From the point of view of the value of commodity production, this is already the limit.



This was not enough from the point of view of capital. Now we have the living labour which is expended in producing the commodity manually [**0**], [177]but which is integrated in two moments [1], the green being the **paid living labour** and the red the **surplus value** (rate of surplus value = 100%). Let us consider that there are 2 workers, **OA** and **OB**, and each of them spends this amount of labour [each half of the column] in the production of this commodity [**0**]. Each one receives the value of his labor power and we have the starting situation. And now [**2**] when we find that with machinery the productivity of labor can be doubled, 2 workers are no longer needed, OB is enough, and the value of the commodity has fallen to this level.

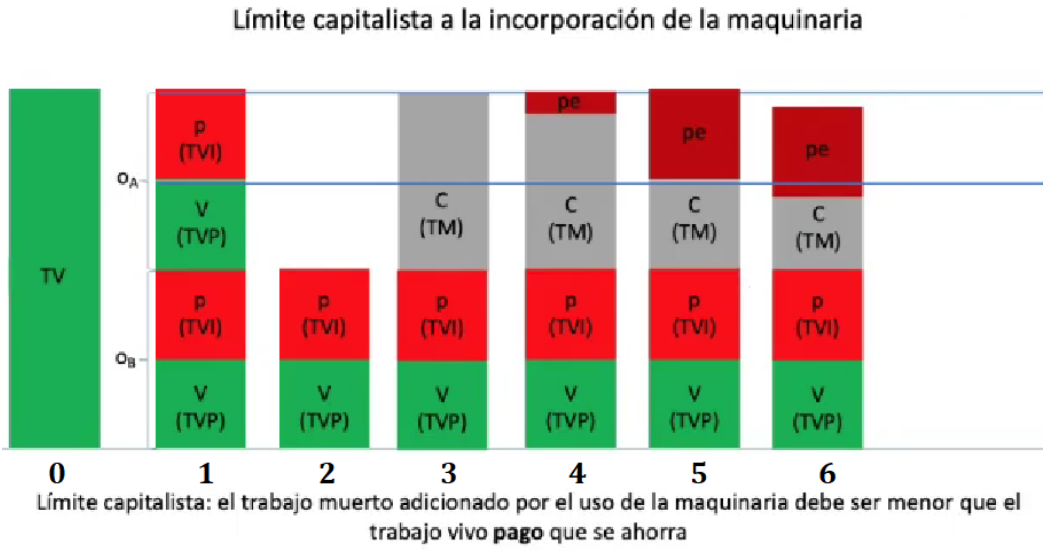
[**3**] But we find that the constant capital has appeared, which is going to transfer its value to the commodity, and we are already in the same position as at the beginning [column 3 of the commodity limit]. This constant capital transfers to the product each time it is used an amount of value equal to the value that the OA previously produced. There is a problem here because it is not simply surplus value (there Marx uses the word "profit"), we are going to try to look at it elementarily. [...] Now what we have is that the **surplus value** was reduced by half, because the unpaid TV made by the OA disappeared.

But if we look at it from the point of view not simply of surplus value, but of profit, beyond the fact that the machine is worth much more than simply this, now the capitalist has this constant capital **(TM)** put into the machine, plus this variable capital put into the purchase of the worker's labor power that was left over to obtain this amount of **surplus value**, and before [1] with half [OA value + OB value] I obtained double the surplus value. Thus this machine, from the point of view of the capitalist, diminishes the appropriation of surplus value no matter how much it doubles the productivity of labor, from the capitalist point of view it is rubbish, because it diminishes the mass of surplus value that it appropriates in proportion to the capital advanced.

[177] I have personally added the numbers in the schematics to facilitate the presentation.

So, this machine [**3**], which when we looked at it at the commercial limit we said: it can be the criterion... One can look at it as a criterion that from the point of view of the unity of social labor is neutral, the labor applied decreased in the same proportion that the labor applied in the production of machinery is increasing, the total labor applied by society in producing that commodity is the same as it applied before. and it may appear as indifferent, is it more worthwhile to apply living labor to produce the machine or to apply the TV simply to produce this commodity, if the amount of TV that is going to be applied throughout the useful life of the machine is going to be the same? From the point of view of the capitalist, that difference that one can say has a material character, is useless.

[I put the same scheme back to look at it better]



[**4**] And this is where one can begin to look at the same thing that we said in the case of the "mercantile" machinery, that since the productivity of labor is going to increase, if the working day remains the same, the number of units that come into circulation will increase, while those who did not incorporate the machine will continue to send into circulation the same mass of commodities as before. And then, what appears is the possibility of... That what the capitalist has as a condition to incorporate the machine, is that if he sells at the social value [high blue line], his individual value [**TVP** + **TVI** + **TM**] is smaller and has extraordinary **surplus value**. But the problem is that it cannot sell to the old social value, because the mass of product has increased.

[**5**] Then, in order that the extraordinary surplus-value which he appropriates by selling to the social value may be equal to the situation he had before he incorporated the machinery, and with the same capital he may obtain the same mass of surplus-value as before, only that some of it is extraordinary surplus-value and the other normal surplus-value extracted from his labourer, he would have to be able to sell to the old social value, and only if the machine transfers this amount of value [**MT**] to each unit of product, does it make sense to incorporate the machinery.

[6] This machine [2] and this other [3] from the point of view of the capitalist cannot be incorporated, only [can it do so with] a machine that manages to double the productivity of labor just like the others but so cheap that it only transfers that amount of value to it [TM] to the product. And what is at stake here is that it cannot be sold at the old social value, but underneath, and consequently the previous machine [5] is not going to be cheap enough to allow its incorporation either, because the value it transferred was equal to the value of the labor power it displaced. The new machine now transfers less value to the product than that of the labor power it displaced, and so the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery is that the value added by constant capital to the commodity has to be *less than* the pay *TV* saved, not simply the same. [It looks good comparing (1) and (6)].

What appears immediately is that it is much easier to produce a machine that doubles the productivity of labor but is so expensive that it transfers this amount of value to the product [3] than to achieve a machine that does the same thing but only transfers this amount of value [6] to the value of the product.

[I advance a later explanation in response to Javiera] The individual value of the commodity is *up to* the C (TM), it is selling at that price something that contains an individual value that reaches here. The old social value reached up here, and it is selling above the individual value and below the social value. What is going to happen in this scheme is that in the long run, this is going to be the new social value [lower blue line], the extraordinary surplus value is going to have disappeared, but what is going to happen in the general movement is that the value of labor power is going to decrease [green box] and the rate of surplus value is going to increase.

I always put it in the terms that make the scientific consciousness of the accountant, the vulgar consciousness of the capitalist. How is it going to be objectively presented to someone who has to decide scientifically whether or not it is convenient to incorporate the machinery? The analysis he is going to make (I am going to put it in the practical terms of immediate movement) is that the amortization of the machinery has to cost him less than the wages he saves. If amortizing the machine costs more than the salary that is going to be saved, it does not make sense because it will make the product more expensive. If it costs less, it makes sense because what appears to that subject as the cost of that commodity is going to decrease. This is crudely the expression of this capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery. [...].

[Alexander asks whether it is possible to distinguish in the movement of a particular capital, of these portions of surplus-value, which corresponds to those produced by that same capital and which to an expropriation of other capitals.]

[Edgardo mentions that he read in Caligaris and Starosta that there is a discussion with positions that deny the existence of transfers of surplus value].

The thing about this question is that one has to go back to the starting point of the determinations of the value of commodities... because it is born of value-

producing labor. I put it in these terms: that a producer of commodities, when he takes his commodities into exchange because he has a productivity of labor above the average, takes the product of more social labor than the one he put in, is not simply a merit of that individual: it is also a demerit of the other producers of that commodity. It is not that he produced more value, but that the quantity of abstract labour which he applied is socially recognized as corresponding to a greater quantity of labour thanks to the fact that there are others who spend a larger quantity. And the same thing conversely, in which case it is not that they produce less value abstractly, the determination of value does not have the character of what each one does alone, but reflects what happens in the unity of the production of *that* commodity. So, one is going to be recognized as having a smaller number as if it were larger from the social point of view, and the other the other way around. In normality, as a whole, the producers of that commodity are going to have put in a total material quantity of abstract labour which gives titles to the product of the same total quantity of abstract labour materialised in another form which they are going to take away. What happens is that the one who put materially below the average is going to take the product of a greater material amount of work.

When it is discussed in the terms you observed, Edgardo, from that discussion, what appears because of a traffic problem... Because the same thing happens in circulation: when a commodity is left over, it is not that the productivity of labor has decreased and then it appropriates less value: it appropriates less because it is selling below value (it may be that the productivity of labor is so high that, selling below the value, the average, it still receives more than it put in). And there, the one who was in the average situation and sells below value, will have put in a quantity of abstract labor materially that until now was recognized as socially necessary in normality, but since normality has the form of the permanent fluctuation of what is left over or what is lacking, he will receive the product of a smaller material quantity of abstract labor recognized as socially necessary. And on the contrary, if he is lacking, he will be able to sell more expensively, and his labor is neither more nor less productive than before, nor did he spend more or less labor materially.

When it is stated that surplus value springs from the movement of circulation (this is linked to proposals that come from Rubin, although I do not impute that to Rubin), because the profit of extraordinary surplus value springs from circulation and not from the production process... The workers of the capitalist who has the technical innovation do not yield more work. When its product, which contains a certain amount of labor, comes into circulation—and here it is no longer simply normality but *the movement of normality*—it will be circumstantially recognized as if it encloses more, and someone will have to pay for this at the expense of his share of the product of social labor. I don't know if it was clear: I look at the workers of this capitalist who now has extraordinary surplus value, and they work the same time as before, their labor power is worth the same. And if surplus-value is the form of surplus-labour, they can never have produced surplus-value because there is no more surplus-labour.

Thus, circulation is attributed with the ability to create value. And this has a very developed expression that is now very developed, which is the proposal that

comes from Rubin and that is born from seeing that value originates in circulation (no matter how much Rubin says that it exists in production, he says that it does not exist "in the full sense" but in the head of the producer, until it reaches circulation). and then supply and demand determine the value of commodities, because they are sold dearer or cheaper by the circumstances of circulation. And then there is no more value: commodities are always exchanged as equivalents, there is never a deviation from value, therefore there is no basis on which production is corrected (whether there is too much or too little), and it is the degraded version of neoclassical economics.

Neoclassical economics says: price is determined by the play of supply and demand, but supply and demand have an earlier explanation. For them, utility and scarcity versus the maximization of total utility subject to diminishing marginal utility is what is manifested in the movements of supply and demand, and then some advance/retreat, move on the basis of that foundation. And the equilibrium point where everyone maximizes their total welfare subject to the budget constraint (which corresponds to scarcity) and diminishing marginal utility is the point that is going to be manifested in the unity of supply and demand.

What does the most vulgar of neoclassical economics do? It says: it's supply and demand, period. And the price is determined by the theorem of the spider's web that moves between supply and demand until it reaches the equilibrium point. In Volume 3 Marx says: the norm cannot be explained by the deviations, it is the norm that explains the deviations. At the point where supply and demand are equal, the differences between supply and demand do not explain anything because they are cancelled out, so what determines the price? There are lines of Marxism that are presented as very elaborate, such as the so-called "New Reading of Marx", which say this: supply and demand determine the value of commodities.

Here it appears that labor power is sold below its value. Why is it undersold? Marx says that they are displaced to such a degree in some branches that they flow into others where, because of the cheapened presence of this labor force, where wages fall below their value, machinery cannot enter. If one says that supply and demand determine value, then labor power is never sold below value, because it is sold at what supply and demand cause it to be sold. So you fall into an apologetics of the capitalist mode of production, because you are saying that wages are falling brutally (in Argentina there are registered wages that are so grossly below the value of labor power as to be below the so-called "poverty line") and they do not have to complain because they are selling their commodities for value. So, such is the degree of aberration of that approach...

The first news I had about the existence of this type of approach was as a result of the fact that my book on *Knowing Capital Today*, in the 1st edition, had made a discussion group at the UNAM on a series of works on *Capital*, and the one who commented on my book, which was published in another book, he criticizes my development by saying that I do not know the fundamental contribution that Marx made when he discovered that supply and demand enter into the determination of value. I read his criticism until I got to that point, and I already said that it was not worth continuing with the proposal.

In the 2nd edition of my work I incorporated the work of Heinrich, one of the heads of the New Reading, who says that when Marx speaks of socially necessary labor it is supply and demand. It surprises me, it baffles me, how can you say that, how can you not think about what that statement means!? There is no unity then, there is no way to recognize normality, there is no sale of labor power below value! What is the political necessity of making these statements, and that Marx be presented as the basis of these...? I refrain from saying that Marx says this or that, I only quote and what I say I assume on my own. In Heinrich's book it is attributed to Marx. And Marx talks all the time about commodities that are sold above or below value. What does it say about the political weakness of the working class, that in the name of the production of the consciousness of the working class those affirmations are made that leave the working class disarmed? If I go to discuss wages and they tell me that supply and demand determine the value of my labor power, I have already lost. What am I going to discuss? I have plenty everywhere, what they pay me is fine because it is what defines supply and demand.

I am going to take another aspect of this, because it is with another of those that the discussion is. I am going to take the liberty of jumping to Volume 3, because it is a political discussion in Argentina that also affects the weakness of the working class today. This is linked to land rent. The proposition that if there is a capitalist who operates on a better land, his workers produce more value. It is not that the commodities that are subject to... the productivity of labor to natural conditions that are not controllable by capital, and that then it is necessary to put ... Different natural conditions in production, the condition for the capital that is going to operate on the "worst land" is that it is normally valued, just like that which is on the best land, and since they all sell at the same price, the price is determined by the normal condition of the capital that operates on the worst land, and this generates an extraordinary surplus value for the capitals that operate on the best land, and that this surplus value is appropriated by the landowner... Surplus value that springs from circulation, because to say that this surplus value is the product of more productive labor, which produces more value... Apart from kicking the unity of the whole development, it has among other things this implication...

And I have heard one of these people say that they are so impressed because he says that in Argentina there are 160 taxes, that when they were discussing the withholdings on a television program[178], he said: "No, but the withholdings raise prices, because it adds to the price." If I say that the extraordinary surplus value obtained by the capitalist who operates on the best land and who loses it to the landlord is in reality value produced by the workers of the worst land, then I would have to say that the withholdings, the taxes on exports, would have to raise the price. So you get to this level of incoherence with respect to... that surplus value springs from circulation because phenomena of circulation cause a labor to be enhanced or weakened to produce surplus value.

This response has been very messy and... For me you always have to start from the beginning, that this is a process of social metabolism that is based on work. The

[178] This is what they call export taxes in Argentina.

problem is how to allocate the total labour capacity of society, which is carried in the body of the various members of the whole society, how to allocate to each one how he is going to spend his quota of labour power in general under a particular useful form. That is what one always has to keep in front of you, that value is not an abstract social validation, it is the social form that takes the material content of that assignment of social labor done privately and independently.

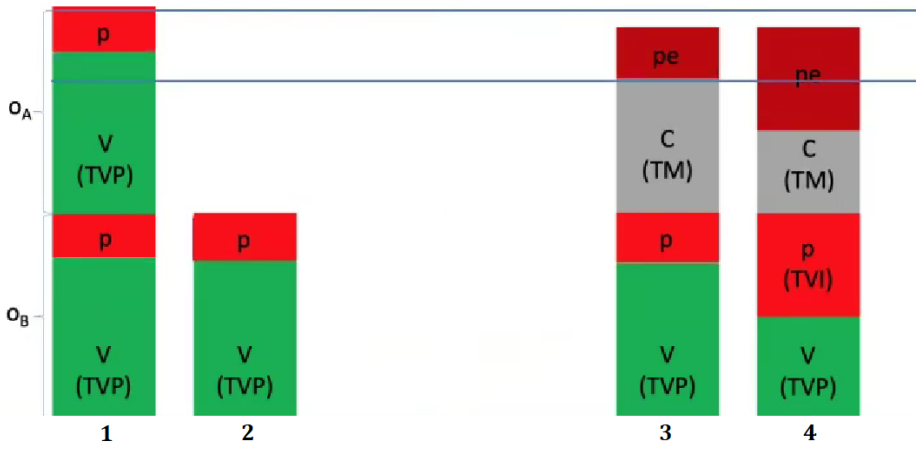
If you pull out of the middle, what appears is: well, this is moving in the air. If one starts from the beginning, one says: here there is a problem of *material* unity, established indirectly. The fact that their material unity is established indirectly implies that apart from the fact that things can be produced that are useless, that are not use value, that there are individuals who put in more work and take the product of less and vice versa. In the movement of normality, and then in the complex development of the movement of capital, what spoke of peculiar branches of production that at this point cannot be answered by following the development, but which make it appear that value springs from circulation... Value is socially necessary abstract labor that is *materialized* in its product, and in circulation there is no more labor, the amount of labor that there is cannot change, what happens is that it can be recognized more or it can be recognized less, but the amount of labor has not changed. For someone to be recognized more, another has to be recognized less, although materially each one put what they put in. Commodities enter circulation with value, only then is their value revealed. This is what Marx says that in the relationship the attribute can never emerge, what the relationship does is to reveal the existence of the attribute.

I make a clarification: those who want to read that value springs from circulation and that supply and demand determine value, have two places where they can go to look for it in *Capital* and they will be able to tell if Marx says this. Now, one has to look critically at that, because if one wants to answer with quotes, one can find a thousand quotes that say the opposite of those two. But if someone wants to cling to the quotes, there is one in Volume 1, when he begins to look in the circulation and says: "add substance, magnitude of value", and he does not put where that substance comes from, and that if it is added to that it is that someone else has gone. But it is not on. And the other is in Volume 3, where supply and demand appear determining the value. One has to reproduce it for oneself and subject this development to criticism and say: in what I am finding here, how can it be explained that more value appears from circulation, if commodities enter exchange with value? Some must have lost a part of theirs so that another can see theirs increased, there is no other source of value.

[Answering a question about extraordinary surplus value] [...] the socially necessary abstract labour which is embodied in the commodity is the *normal mass* of labour. That is why in the simplest form it corresponds to the average. But the *total* mass of labor that society allocated under this concrete form... if some were more efficient than others, some have more to do at the expense of others, but it is the mass that corresponds to the socially necessary abstract labor, which entitles the mass of its producers to take the product of the same amount of socially necessary abstract labor done by others.

We are left with two questions that Marx exposes in the chapter. One is what happens to the worker who has been displaced by machinery. The second is (so Marx puts it): why is it that when the labor power is surplus, it is paid below the value and that hinders the incorporation of machinery? But one can also look at it in relation to whether the value of labor power is higher or lower.

Here we had the situation of the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery, where the constant capital that is added to the value of the commodity has to be less than the variable capital that is saved with the incorporation of machinery. What if labor power is relatively expensive (in the abstract)? The rate of surplus value is low.

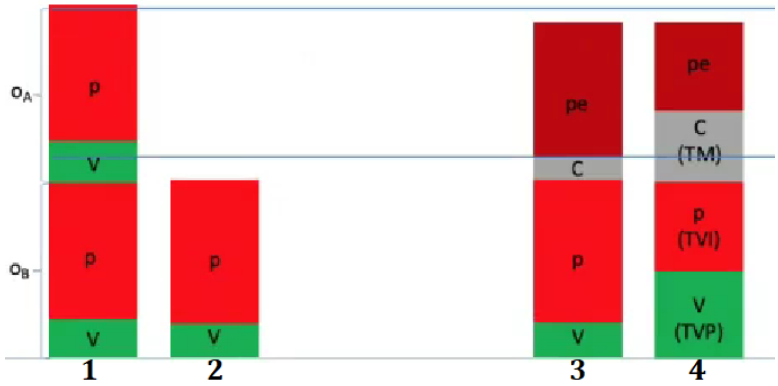


This [**4**][179] is the situation we had in the starting case, with a surplus value rate of 100%. In this other [**1**] the capital gain is less than 100%. The difference is going to be, reaching this price [cap of (**3**) and (**4**)], that in the case we looked at before where labor power had this value [**4**: value **(TVP)**], a machine could only be incorporated that transferred this amount of value [**4**: constant capital **(TM)**]] to each unit, when the labor force has this value [**1**: OA value], going below what the displaced TVP cost arrives much earlier. And so, the same increase in productivity of labor can be achieved with a machine [**3**] that transfers more value than [**4**] to the product. It is easier to get a machine to double the productivity of labor by transferring this amount of value [**3**] to its product than to get it to do so but only transfer this amount [**4**].

This is the opposite case to the one Marx is proposing. It is the case in which, since this [**1**: OA] is the worker who is to be displaced by the machine, how much value does the machine have to transfer to the value of the product? Less than what the displaced labor force cost. This [**3**] is the point [less?]... I took it there, because the sum of the two capital gains is equivalent to... the two surplus values, but the sum of capital is smaller here [**3**] than it was here [**1**], so the capitalist will

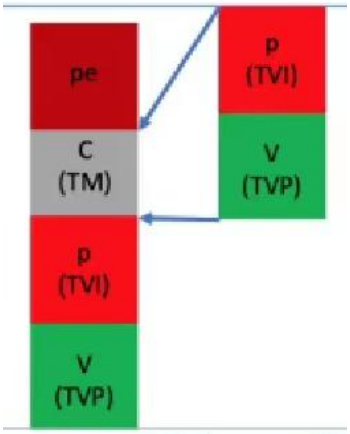
[179] Again, the numbering entered under each column is its own. Sorry for the inconvenience for how cumbersome it can be to read the explanation in this way.

have no doubt that he must incorporate the machinery. This was the case that the more expensive the labor force, the easier it is for capital to replace TV with TM.



The cheaper the labor force, the situation is the other way around. Because now to get to the point where you're going to start saving TVP, you have to eat a lot of the total amount of work that there was, and consequently you have to start eating a lot of surplus value. And the machine with this value of labor power [1] will only be able to be incorporated if the machine doubles the productivity of labor but only adds this amount of value [**3**] to each unit of product, of the part of the value of labor power [**1**: value of OA].

[...] And so I'm going to put something that may be anticipated, and a contradiction that arises from this. If we said that the capitalist mode of production is revolutionary because it continually revolutionizes the materiality of the labor process, and consequently revolutionizes what a worker is, what a capitalist is, what a human being is, and that revolution goes in a direction that contains a contradiction with respect to the private character of labor, because it advances in its socialization, What we have in front of us is that every action that the working class takes in defense of the value of its labor power, pushes capital to incorporate machinery, makes it easier for it the more expensive labor power is. And consequently, the more the transformation in the materiality of work becomes more acute, the more the socialization of private labor develops. So, the defense of the conditions of sale of labor power is not simply an immediate need of the working class, but has a progressive character in this, it pushes it to develop machinery. At the expense of what?



At the expense of the incorporation of machinery displaces the OA, which worked this amount of time in each production cycle [right] and has been displaced by a machine that only transfers this amount of value to the value of the product [left]. And if this machine serves to make 10 units, the total labour produced by that machine is constant capital * 10, whereas if the labour in this branch had remained manual, this labourer would have worked 10 times this quantity [full right column]. He has been displaced by a machine which contains less labour in total than the living part paid by the labourer, and he has been displaced for his whole working day. It may seem that this worker could get work by producing the machine, but this comes later in Marx's development, what he will call "compensation theory". And so, this which has a progressive character, when the working class pushes the value of labor power up and makes it easier for capital to incorporate machinery, it does so at the expense of moving a part of the labor power of the working class itself out of the production process. Everything that happens in the capitalist mode of production is at the expense of the working class, even its advance in pushing capital, in the immediate conditions of its own reproduction, to advance in the socialization of private labor: it does not come for free, it is at the expense of a part of its body.

The other thing that was here was this: when we compare this situation to this [expensive/cheap labor force], it's something that has an immediate manifestation in Latin American countries (although there is it all over the world), where labor power is cheaper because it has less value or because it's paid below value (let's take it that way). and it is more difficult to incorporate machinery. Consequently, there are branches of production where manual labor subsists, when in other national spaces, where labor power is paid for its value, it has been replaced by machinery. Spain is not so far from these situations compared to other European countries and its own history.

[Pedro comments that in Marxist economics it is often argued that the incorporation of machinery comes from the need to compete with other capitalists, and whether this is a product of the appearances of circulation.]

The same as when we saw the chapter on relative and extraordinary surplus value: it is a condition of life and death for the individual capitalist as the personification of his capital to be at the forefront of the development of the productivity of the labor of his workers. Those who cannot sustain themselves in

this condition are displaced from production in competition. The only thing the capitalist sees is that if he does not obtain an extraordinary profit he will be defeated, he cannot stop doing it. Competition is universal, it is not only in the same branch or in the nearby branches: if other commodities become cheaper because the productivity of labor increases, there comes a point when those that did not become cheaper because there was no progress in the productivity of labor are so expensive that they end up disappearing from consumption.

We do not yet have the concrete forms of competition (Volume 3). One can present it as this capitalist, as he is having an extraordinary surplus value, others try to advance more and there are some who are falling by the wayside, or new capitalists enter because here there is a source of extraordinary surplus value that in other branches there is not. The concrete movement of competition has credit as its most powerful instrument. It is not that in this branch of production there is a surplus and we all leave, and in this other one there is extraordinary profit and we all come. I always put it with the capitalist who produces *S*: he cannot start producing *G* because more surplus value is obtained circumstantially. What moves capital from one branch to the other is credit. Where the movement of capital is prosperous, the capitalist goes to the bank (to put the figure), and the banker says: with this balance sheet, it is worth lending to this individual because he will be able to pay. And the other one comes along who has more and more losses and their credit is not renewed. And then he was not in a slow agony: he died, he broke.

So, when you look at the forms of competition, you have to look at this specific form because it is key. If not, it seems that it was a very abstract movement. The result is this: in one branch they end up leaving, one technology ends up disappearing and is displaced by another, in movements that have the complexity of being strongly mediated by the flows of capital loaned. What the capitalist sees is immediacy, he does not see surplus value. When we advance in Volume 2 and Volume 3 we will see why the capitalist sees things as he sees them, as they are presented to him, and what he sees is all the opposite of this.

What follows are the effects on the worker, and the first step that appears is a development on women's labor and child labor. I usually dwell much more at this point: to look at all the transformations that take place in the capitalist mode of production in this respect, where it is very immediately evident how the capitalist mode of production is revolutionary, in a historical development that occurs very visibly within the capitalist mode of production itself. It is the same historical development as what happens with men's work, but a part of that development appears – because it is not simply like that – as something that is present at the starting point. And so, this part does not seem to me to be left for later, it is important to stop because it springs very immediately from what is appearing in the development that Marx makes.

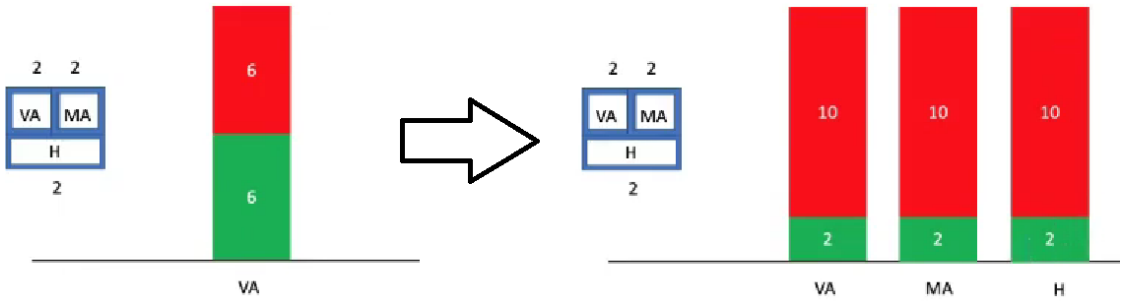
3. Immediate effects which mechanical industry exerts on the worker.

a) *Appropriation of subsidiary labor forces by capital. Female and child labor*.

We had been seeing [...] the transformations that the worker undergoes with the development of machinery. And we had seen that the machinery – which has the tool incorporated as part of its mechanism – eliminates the force of the person who is working, with which the tool is applied to the object of work. That need disappeared because the force is produced by the machine itself. Marx then goes on to show that the development of machinery allows "[...] employing workers without muscular strength or without complete physical development", therefore the work of women and children becomes a general condition for the process of capital accumulation.

So, in contrast to what we were seeing before, that workers were expelled from the production process, now it turns out that at the same time it multiplies the base it has of wage labor power because it turns the entire working family into direct sellers of labor power. The development that follows this is: this has nothing to do with the increase in the productivity of labor itself, but it has the same effect of increasing the rate of surplus value for capital. The relative surplus value arose exclusively from the increase in productivity, and here there is a similar effect, which arises from the fact that the value of the labor power of the working family is now apportioned among all the members of the family. I have a very simple outline but this question is immediately visible:

Relative surplus value for the incorporation of the entire working family into the sale of FT[180]



Rate of $p = 6/6 = 100\%$ Rate of $p = 30/6 = 500\%$

We are going to consider what appears in development as Marx puts it, with a family structure that one can consider archaic today, but which comes at the origin of the capitalist mode of production and throughout its development as the structure of reproduction of the labor power that is in activity and of the future labor force. which would be this structure of an adult male (VA), an adult female (MA) and children (H).

[180] I put slide 1 and the final slide together to illustrate in the smallest possible space the 4 that are.

Let us suppose that the commodities necessary for the adult male to reproduce his labor power, his existence, is 2 hours and corresponds to $2. The working woman as much, and the children as much. In the structure that Marx proposes at the origin of the capitalist mode of production, where what appears is that the seller of labor power is the VA because physical force is needed in the production process, the value of the labor power of this VA is equivalent to the product, let's suppose, of 6 hours of work, that their working day is 12 hours and the rate of surplus value is 100%.

But now, when all the members of the working family become sellers of labour-power (let us continue to assume that each one still needs 2 units of labour-power[181] to reproduce his life), the value of the labour-power of the adult male now has only to cover the value of the commodities which he himself is going to consume. The working day continues to be 12 hours, and now this adult male worker, not because he changed the productivity of labor but because he changed the basis of who are sellers of labor power in the working family, is going to reproduce his labor power in 2 hours and he is going to work 10 hours for free for capital, and the women and children of the working family are the same. And now we have that this working family produces $30 of surplus value, and the value of labor power now distributed among the whole working family is $6, so the rate of surplus value went from 100% to 500%. This additional source of capital appreciation appeared.

Now it turns out that what was the condition for the purchase and sale of labor power, which was that the individual bearer of that labor power was a free individual, what appears now is that there are sellers of labor power who are not fully free individuals, or who cannot be free and that therefore there is someone who is going to sell the labor power of these others who appear as new workers. I proposed that we now focus on the development of women's work and what this implies about people who are *partially* free, are not completely free, and how the development of the capitalist mode of production sees the transformations generated by the production of relative surplus value through the system of machinery.

[Alejandro comments that he does not end up being closed by this comparison he makes of slavery with children, which appears from the base of the personal bond as being sold by his father]

He sells it, but for a period of time: he sells his labor power to him. The worker is no longer a free individual who is the private owner of his own labor power. He is not in a relationship of personal dependence on the capitalist, but on the one who sells his labor power.

I'll start with this. When one looks at the historical development of the capitalist mode of production (which we will see in the penultimate chapter, primitive accumulation), a series of figures will appear in the primitive, initial forms of the

[181] *Goods to be consumed for the value of $2.

capitalist mode of production, which is full of male workers who are forced laborers: serfs, slaves, estate societies... There are even cases of forced laborers not because of ties of personal dependence, but because of monetary ties: there is debt bondage, into which an individual who was free falls.

So, it is not that the capitalist mode of production is born into history with adult males as free individuals. But early in the development of the capitalist mode of production, since capital needs labor power that has the productive attributes of a free individual, the adult males of the working class—those of the capitalist class become fully free individuals—become free individuals but *only* for private legal relations, they are not for political relations. What one has in the whole historical development of the struggle of the working class (the classic example is that of England) in the middle of the nineteenth century, the struggle of the Chartists, is for them to lower the amount of wealth that one must have in order to vote and to be able to be a parliamentarian.

In Argentina we have a figurine of May 22, and the people want to know what it is about and who was inside the cabildo. And to be a neighbor there were two conditions: either to have property or to have some capacity... that it was not even the case of the slaves, but that the general workers of the city were not neighbors, they did not have the capacity to participate in the open cabildo. We have another very expressive example of how legal forms are transformed and how one has to look for an explanation of what is being transformed in the material process of production. This is also with local reference, but all Argentines are supposed to have studied the Assembly of 1813 that decreed the "freedom of wombs" which is that every born of a slave became a free individual. With the peculiarity that until he was 18 years old he was in the family of his mother's masters – so he had to work for them – and the boys at 18 years old incorporated them into the army. In the same year – when we studied it they presented it to us as the empire of freedom – there was what no longer exists today, but it was called the "police edicts": the chief of police of the province of Buenos Aires issued an edict that said that any individual who had no boss or property would be reputed to be lazy and badly entertained. and then he is either given a patron or incorporated into the army. What appears is: he is not a fully free individual by any means, and he is turned into the servant of a capitalist (mainly cattle ranchers).

Alejandro [Chat]: Did that attack the gauchos?

JIC: Alejandro's question is ambiguous, but... It is the form of forced labor. Where there is a process that has a whole series of connotations. First, that there is little labor force and this is the way to turn the worker into a forced laborer. Second: it is a border that is open to the aboriginal population, and then the inhabitant of the border who could be an independent or subsistence producer, is incorporated into the work of an agrarian capitalist. It is a time when the army is incorporating freed slaves, in many cases the master donated them and in others the state bought them.

I make this clarification: to my surprise – because I expected to find this in the nineteenth century – the Rural Labor Code of the province, if I remember correctly,

of Catamarca, still has a clause of this type, that whoever does not have a boss is a lazy person (the terms changed). It is not supposed to be applied, but it is still in the code that organizes the work. So it is part of the general structure of an advance on the border with the native population, of incorporating that labor force, of using the individuals who began to produce on their own for self-subsistence and then incorporating them into the wage labor force. So, I take these expressions.

And the other thing we have is that in England, where for the first time working-class males become citizens, with so-called "political rights," that's going to happen in the mid-nineteenth century. So, it's not just that adult working-class males... [...][182]... union was legally prohibited, and it is also a transformation that will occur during the nineteenth century. For those who love Adam Smith so much, he criticizes the workers because he says that they want to associate, which for him is an attack on the general welfare, but then he says that they always have the upper hand, because they are weaker: the bosses do associate with each other and the state supports them [for them it was not forbidden]. So he has a critique of the conditions of reproduction of labor power—to put it kindly.

So, I put all this in reference to what we are going to look at about salaried women's work, because it develops when adult males of the working class appear as free individuals for private legal relations, and women do not. So, the one who sells that labor power is the father if the woman is single or the husband if she is married. And the expressions of this (I always care to point them out), there are two or three that are very marked.

One is the structure of religious marriage ceremonies, at least the ones one has had the opportunity to see, where the bride, who is the property of the father, is *given* by the father to her husband. That is the symbolism that is enclosed and that subsists to this day. Another expression typical of this, which now—at least in Argentina—is declining, but at some point was absolute, is the married surname, preceded by the possessive pronoun "de" and which says that this woman belongs to this man. I think this is changing, but this happened with women of my generation; women who stood out in their activity (researchers, musicians...) and who, perhaps at the time they began their careers, became known directly by their husband's surname. Then, they separated from their husbands at some point in their lives and yet they continued to be recognized with the husband's surname, which appears as the abolition of the personality of this subject replaced by that of the husband.

So all these are concrete expressions of what a process is, where it comes from and how this type of bonds of personal dependence are dissolved, where I note one thing: the person who mediates his general social relationship through a bond of personal dependence (the case of women, where the man is the seller of the labor power and the woman is not). it is doubly alienated, because it has the alienation of the bonds of personal dependence, and moreover, since the general bond that the other has of the general social relation is an alienated bond, it suffers this double alienation.

[182] The recording is cut off for a few seconds.

The other example that I am going to take from this, which for me was also striking because it is produced by an individual who has a scientific conscience, is the following. In 1869 the first national population census was carried out in Argentina and there was a person — I don't remember his name — who was the director of the census. And what was traditionally done is that the director made a report synthesizing and analyzing the results. And the report looks at the population, how it is distributed in the provincial states, the ages, the prisoners, the sick – in particular the mental, but there are all the diseases – and it reaches the point where it is going to analyze the work. And she analyzes the different sectors, and she arrives at the fabric and clothing sector and finds that there is a huge proportion, that the bulk is women's work. This guy tries to make a relationship here. One may think that she is going to compare it with other branches, with the male work that there is in this branch, with the total number of women in society... But the comparison he makes is with the number of widows and orphans in society. Because for this individual, a woman who has a husband or father is not going to be present in the general labor process, despite the fact that the production of textiles and clothing was already present before the nineteenth century, during the colony, female work was very present in these branches – not yet manufacturing but a lot of work at home. weavers who then sold to a commercial capitalist.

What happens in this situation? Capital needs the labor power of free individuals. And then, the women of the working class become free individuals for private legal relations. Men were so for private schools, but not for public schools. But when women become free individuals for private individuals, men are already free for political relations, then the contrast continues to appear. Women's work is expanding... And I'm going to add something that I should have added at the beginning.

Marx focuses on differences in physical strength. There is another determination that one sees at play here: there is also the process of biological reproduction of the labor force of which women are direct carriers. And capital needs the labor force to be reproduced strongly, because in the case of England it is in strong expansion, and we have to consider that by 1820 the life expectancy at birth of the English population was 30 years, and 15 years later it was 36 years, but those who reached 10 years, they had a life expectancy of 50 years (we saw it in manufacturing). So, the need to replace the labor force is very high, and that limits the use of female labor power. And one of the phenomena (which Marx does not present in *Capital*) is that the "natural" life of individuals is lengthening and infant mortality is decreasing. This is also freeing women as sellers of labor power.

The synthetic expression of the role of biological reproduction is the image that appeared in shipwrecks, but that continues to appear in a situation of catastrophe, it is that of "Women and children first", because they are the subjects who guarantee biological reproduction or who have prospects of a longer natural life. The other thing I want to emphasize is that it is not that there was no female work in the beginnings of the capitalist mode of production. There are some classic figures in the mines, where the coal is brought by the man because the pickaxe can only be handled by one and he is the one who has the most physical strength, but

the hauling in the coal wagons is pushed by a series of women and children, because there they can add several labor forces.

As capital needs *fully* free individuals, the perspective of women becoming free subjects for political relations is increasingly developing in the cases of the US, the USSR and England. But there was going to be a very strong factor that was going to be the bearer of the sustained development of this transformation: the 2nd World War. Because men are at the front as combatants, women who are at the front are generally not, they are in the health service and so on, because it is a war that requires physical force and each national society tries not to risk the biological reproduction of its population. And so, women have to replace men in the process of working in factories. There is a strong expansion of women's work (I know of some other references in the case of the US, I don't know if there were more women combatants in the USSR or not[183]). And once the war is over, there is an attempt, a process of women leaving the factory and returning to work at home, and there is a policy of the American state of what is called "feminization of women." And one of the processes that occurs with the end of the war, linked to it and to the subsequent transformations that also limit the incorporation of women into the general labor process, which is what is called the *baby boom* (of which I am a product), there is a strong recovery in birth rates and so on.

But there is no turning back in this process, and there is a very significant moment in this transformation that occurs in countries that had had significant losses in male population, which is January 1, 1948, when women in France, Italy and Germany become citizens. And in Argentina, the same thing happens in the 1949 constitution. So, we have these transformations, which if we look at today, in part of human societies are very far from having taken place these developments – in some they have regressed sharply. One of the most marked expressions is the countries of North Africa and the so-called Middle East, where in the 50s and 70s there are the so-called "national liberation" struggles that have this: women play a central role, many are leaders of these processes, which are also secular processes. And in these societies this relationship has been turned upside down and women are once again strongly subjected to the personal domination of men, along with a strong expansion of religious consciousness.

So, it is not that this happens simply or linearly, but that it unfolds. And I always say this: when you look at it as a historical development, it takes place with respect to the life of humanity at an incomparable speed, because it unfolds over 200 years, and the life of humanity takes 2 or 3 million years. For the subject who is subjected to the mutilation of his person by relationships of personal dependence, it is an eternity, it seems a process that will never develop. So, one always has to look at it with this double determination: how it appears as a historical process and how it appears to the subject of that process, which is the one who is mutilated in his condition as a fully free individual.

Alejandro: A concrete expression of this contrast of the man appearing as a free individual for political relations and the woman not yet, is that men could vote in

[183] Alexander mentions Lyudmila Pavlichenko.

some national spaces and women could not. And from there... the entire suffragette movement of the early twentieth and late nineteenth centuries. I was struck when Marx mentions the case that women were "naturally" linked to their children in an affective way, and this whole movement that is dissolving those bonds and the child who still advances on those conditions, the one who still cannot sell his labor power, in an oversight, an inadequate diet, even in drugs... It makes me doubt if what actually caused those children to enter that condition is that women entered to sell their labor power. In fact, he presents this study by Dr. Simon, who appears to be against this movement, and I understand that he personifies the need for mothers to stay at home so that they can continue with this biological reproduction beyond giving birth: care, food... And here the movement of capital appears contradictory to me: it advances in the dissolution of that bond, but it seems as if at this moment when Marx was writing, infant mortality was quite serious and it was necessary that at least until the child was mature, [the mother at home] should be present.

JIC: This is what is characteristic of the capitalist mode of production: everything is at the expense of the working class. We must also think about the specific historical moment when the working day was 14-16h/day in miserable conditions and with a capacity for "real wage"... nothing: bread or potatoes were the main food of the working family. To the point where all of us who have gone through the training of economists have had to study the "Giffen commodities", who takes bread or potatoes as an example, and says that it is assumed that when one of these commodities becomes more expensive, its consumption decreases and when it becomes cheaper it increases. And Giffen observes that when it becomes more expensive, the consumption of bread by the working population increases. And what is happening behind this phenomenon is that the salary is so miserable, that when bread goes up it is only enough to buy bread. And that when bread becomes cheaper, then a little salary is freed up to buy other foods to improve nutrition.

Then this behavior appears that... Neoclassicists enjoy playing with that and spending hours on how curves and relationships move, and not on asking why the working population did what Giffen observed. And that I always wonder if in societies like Argentina there are not consumptions such as mate cocido and flour and fat to make fried cakes that do not follow that structure of relationship with price. I never managed to tempt an economist to look at whether this is happening or not, but it is quite possible that it is.

Alejandro [Chat]: And the bread of England at the time that was mixed with anything as Marx pointed out, if I remember correctly, in chapter VIII.

JIC: Yes, bread was anything but... I had as little flour as possible.

The second issue that one has (there are going to be three), is that the dissolution of the bonds of personal dependence is a development that advances towards universality, indifferentiation, and at the same time for the individual who wears it it is a tear, because he lost one of the bonds he had. I am going to put the other extreme of this relationship: in the nineteenth century and throughout the

twentieth century (and there are still societies where this is in force), families are made up of 5 or 6 children, a few die on the way, but when the parents get old, one of the children takes care of the parents, and the bond of an "affective" nature is maintained as a personal bond.

What is it for my generation (that we have behaved that way with our parents)? What he has to do is the geriatric one, which is the dissolution of a personal bond, the development of the general social relationship because there is a buying and selling of commodities there. And then there's this situation where... It is not a phenomenon where we are moving in this direction and nothing happens with the bonds of personal dependence, it depends on the cases, but there are forms of the bonds of personal dependence that imply that: the individual lost a part of what was his person, and replaced it with an impersonal bond. So, it's this permanent contradiction.

That is the second aspect that I wanted to raise. Marx in the *Grundrisse* makes this observation of what is the historical role of the capitalist mode of production: to generate a society of individuals with universal capacities and needs. And this is the dissolution of the bonds of personal dependence, and therefore all these movements are an expression of the advance towards the production of universal individuals, because the bonds of personal dependence are strongly petty, because if I have this bond with this person, then it is not the same as that other person with whom I do not have it. In a relationship of universality, all ties become indifferent to whether it is this person or another.

The third thing that one has to consider when one is reading Marx's development are the determinations that are proper to the time, and those that are not only general of the time, but of a doctor of philosophy (or law, I think).[184] You have to think about what that subject is and the enormous capacity it has to rise *above what it is*, with what it produces with all its action, but one must not forget who that is. And there is an episode in Marx's life that is very expressive of this (I think I have already commented on it), which I think is that Engels' companion dies, and Marx responds to him by asking him for money for the piano lessons of one of the daughters. Because the conception that this individual has of what a young lady does as the daughter of a doctor, is that she studies piano. So one cannot judge that individual with today's standards because it is absurd.

A lot of trend that appears today as if we are going to judge everything as if it were today... Precisely what one has to look at is the capacity that one has, being that, to rise above that and to have done what it did: it objectifies the alienated consciousness of the working class as a free subject that recognizes itself in the powers it has to overcome the capitalist mode of production. Today Marx's texts would not be accepted in academia because they would be considered aggressive and insulting. It is a political discussion. So one has to be clear about this when one is looking at the person who is there.

[184] Marx left law for philosophy and earned his doctorate with his thesis on Democritus and Epicurus.

And I raise it now because if I don't forget: this dissolution of the bonds of personal dependence also occurs with respect to children. I planted it with the adult children but... With the children with respect to the parents, where the relationship is reversed. Because he is not a free individual, he is subject to a personal power because he has not yet developed the full attributes that allow him to act as a free individual, and yet the relationship increasingly appears to be mediated by juridical, impersonal bonds: the right of children, as if they were already by nature free individuals bearers of the general social relationship with respect to their personal ties.

I remember an expression that predates me, but I find it very expressive. When a boy hit another, the boy's response was: why do you hit me, if I have a father and mother to hit me? Today one hears that and says: poor child, how aberrant that the child recognizes himself as the object of the beatings of his parents. But it's part of the transformation of the bond, because it wouldn't occur to a guy like that to hit back in any way.

Unless someone wants to raise something, I am going to make a "violent" synthesis of the development so far.

Iván: I got a little lost in your presentation but, as a legal person, when does a woman acquire the right to her possessions and her person?

JIC: In Argentina I'm not sure, and in England... I don't know, you would have to look at the legislation, but I suppose that in Marx's time there was already enough of that development. But one of the expressions of this is when she can be the private owner of something (beyond her person). I'm not sure. Even in the relationship, how far it extends in personal ties... Because the historical legal figure of Argentina ("historical" means when I studied) was "Father, guardian or person in charge", the female figure did not appear as being able to have parental authority over the children. And there was the figure of marriage, in which the husband had the administration of the wife's property. This must have been with many steps, even many not formalized, that in fact the widowed or orphaned woman would appear who had to sell her labor power because she had no one to sell it... It must have been dissolved through processes that were not legally formalized for a long time, and very late under the figure of direct regulation by the state. It is clear that when they become citizens it is because they already have the status of free subjects for private legal relations.

Javiera: In a quick search on the internet, in 1918 in England.

JIC: Do you become citizens?

Alejandro: The vote. But in the French Revolution, in the "Rights of Man" they include women as legal subjects, right?

JIC: When the Rights of Man appear... As a flag, let's say, they appear generically, in a general condition. I know very little about the subject, but immediately after the Revolution there is a very strong setback, with the Napoleonic Empire and

everything, they are already of man and not of human beings. But it would have to be studied carefully to see what happened with that situation. And women were not citizens until 1948. In the USSR I think in 1918, and in the United States it seems to me that it is also around that time.

[Iván in the chat copies this text about women's suffrage in Argentina:

> September 14, 1926: Law 11,357 on the civil rights of women is sanctioned, which reformed the Civil Code and recognized all women of legal age, whatever their status, the exercise of their civil rights and functions. It was promulgated on September 22 of the same year. [...] This law expanded the capacity of women in relation to parental authority, administration and disposition of their own property and the regime of marital property.]

Javiera: At the beginning of this part, [Marx] says something that generated doubts in me:

> Forced labor for the benefit of capital not only took the place of children's play, but also that of free labor in the domestic circle carried out within an ethical framework for the family itself.

What do you mean by the latter of "free labor"?

JIC: It's not clear to me, I would have to look at it with all the context where it is. Because at first it seemed to me that I could refer to home work, but it is not that, clearly.

Javiera: It sounds to me like women at that time do not participate in the private legal relationship, but in the domestic circle that work would be "free".

JIC: That doesn't ring a bell to me. What edition do you have? If you have patience with me, I look for it.

Javiera: Fazio's[185].

JIC: Let's see, because here they have translated differently... Here it says:

> Forced labor in the service of the capitalist came to invade and usurp not only the place reserved for children's games, but also the place of free labor within the domestic sphere, and to break down moral barriers, invading the orbit reserved even for the home itself.[186]

If I have to look at it, I mean, call it "free work" within the domestic sphere... "Unforced" would appear in contrast to forced labor, would be in that sense the term "free." And the "moral barriers" also give me doubts, because morality is a form of social relationship that moves along with the transformations of social relations: it was not "immoral" for parents to beat their children, it does not appear as a question of morality. Because like ethics, it is associated with what one should

[185] Cristián Fazio, from the Progreso publishing house.
[186] Marx, K. (1977: 324), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

be. And family relations in these societies were far from being relationships of good reciprocal treatment: violence worked very markedly. So I would have reservations. On the subject of morals, he is commenting on Dr. Smith. The problem with this approach is that it depends on what is called morality. If what appears as moral are certain conditions of the development of life such as learning to cook, having time to breastfeed children at home... if we start from the fact that this is "the moral", the good, a natural duty that capital comes to destroy. Now, the reference to what this transformation would imply is somewhat abstract, and it is half abstract what "free labor within the home" is, I would contrast it with forced labor in the factory, but I don't know if he is referring to that or not.

Javiera: If it is contrasted with forced labor in the factory, it also generates doubts in me. Because if it is put in the context of the countryside, of rural work in the domestic circle, it involves the work of the elderly and children, it could be thought of as "free" work. And there I anchor it with what he says later that capital is by nature a leveller that demands in all spheres "as one of its innate rights, equality of the conditions of [exploitation?] of work, the legal restriction of child labor in one industrial branch becomes the cause of its limitation in the others." There I wanted to propose that this is a leveling and it may occur in some branches, but that, although it is regulated, in the agricultural branch it seems that it deviates from the norm in several things to this day. Because in several footnotes he says: well, if this was the case in the factory, not to mention rural work.

JIC: Yes. It strikes me that in your translation it is as ethical and here as moral. I don't know about the one in Siglo XXI...

Alejandro: It appears as "[...] within decent limits."

JIC: Of course, it's more in line with the expression. It is like a reference to what would be normal or natural. But we would have to look at what word he is using.

If one looks at this development so far, one can go so far as to say that working-class women owe their condition as free individuals to the development of relative surplus value through machinery. And it is strictly so. But in reality, working-class men also have to say the same. But if one were to say this, one is abstracting the content and forgetting the form that these transformations take. And the forms that this takes are who are the immediate bearers, how this transformation develops through their action. The first thing one has to look at here is that the immediate subject is the women of the working class. Let me clarify: the women of the capitalist class were also bearers of these transformations, and in some cases they appear at the forefront of them. But the subject of this is those of the working class.

What happens when the presence of female labor force vendors begins to expand from the point of view of male workers? The availability of labor power for capital is multiplied. A new competitor that, due to its concrete history, is weaker in the relationship with capital: it is just starting in a process that adult male workers have already gone through. It is already known that a weaker competitor

is the one on which the violence of capital will fall most acutely. So, in adult males a reaction appears, which is: here appeared a weaker competitor that bothers the conditions of sale of labor power, so it is better for him to leave.

In the text of *Capital* sometimes some things appear (not in those terms), the expression that women have their place in the home. And there is an expression in Argentina that synthesizes that competence, which is what a man usually says to a woman in a traffic accident: "Go wash the dishes." What is he telling you? The area where the accident occurred is that of general traffic, that of general social relations. The dishes are washed at home, which is the realm of personal dependency bonds. Then he is telling him: the realm of general social relations is mine, and yours is that of the bonds of personal dependence. But it happens to the men of the working class that they have to compete with this weaker subject, and in order not to be defeated in that competition they have to establish relations of solidarity with this other subject that is expanding. So, it is symptomatic that the political movements of the working class (historically the socialist, communist, anarchist parties) had the strong demand for private and public legal rights for women. But it is especially the women of the working class who are the bearers of this action from which it is emerging; they give shape to the need of the total capital of society to convert them into undifferentiated subjects, from the subject of the bonds of personal dependence to free subjects, of political relations.

It is not a problem of abstract equality, it is a problem of indifference. Marx makes the reference (in the *Grundrisse* it is more than in *Capital*) to why the image of equality, and of natural equality in the capitalist mode of production: because since equivalents are exchanged, it seems that the relationship is reflected in a relationship between equals. And no two individuals are really the same. What is at stake in this development of universality is that any attribute of the individual that does not make the very relationship in which he is going to participate, is indifferent to the organization and development of that action, that all difference is erased in universality. What we have then is a process of political struggle, in particular of the women of the working class, which is advancing, and when one looks at Argentina (and in general when the world and the other Latin American countries), one finds manifestations that it is far from having reached the fullness of indifference, no matter how much it has advanced in recent decades. I take two expressions from this that make the condition of a political subject.

The first has a general scope. The fact that in Argentina (I don't know about other countries) there is a "female quota" for legislative representation and so on, says that there is no indifference. If there were, there would be no need for the quota, because even in Argentina, where women are more than men, the individuals who are going to express that political representation would emerge indifferently. The quota, which is a whole development that took a lot of struggles, starts with 1/3 and ends up being $^{50}/_{50}$, which in a population that is not $^{50}/_{50}$, implies a restriction.

And there is another symptom that is specifically Argentine (it may be worse in other Latin American countries). When one looks at the history of women who have been central figures in the development of the political scene in Argentina,

they are either known by the name of their husbands or by the possessive pronoun "de", and Alicia Moreau "de Justo" appears on street signs in an area where they all have women's names.

Daiana: The streets are in the most expensive neighborhood, with the highest real estate speculation in the city of Buenos Aires.

JIC: And the other example that one has is Eva Perón, or "Eva Duarte de Perón," etc. And the other aspect is the use of the first name, which is of personal ties. Now it has dissolved a lot and I understand that in other societies such as Brazil this was much more dissolved. The other is the use of the diminutive, which is more an expression of personal ties. And in Argentina there is Evita, there is Isabelita... and there is Cristina. That differentiation remains. And a newspaper headline that said: "Cristina meets with Obama" stuck with me. And also in Argentina, where historically this use was not used, men... It is part of the transformation of the forms of political relations where the condition of citizen, proper to the free individual of the capitalist mode of production, is reduced to the condition of neighbor. That is from feudal society, one was a neighbor of the town, the French Revolution came to erase that condition of neighbor.

[…] The surname is what represents one in the general social relationship, but since it seems that now the bonds of family affection in the political relationship become an advantage... In Argentina where that did not exist, Perón was always Perón, he was never Juan Domingo. But now there are men who are starting to use this, and for me it was expressive that someone who was president and began to call himself Mauricio, Mauri, Mau... Another politician in Argentine politics made this clear by saying: we must never forget that Mauricio is Macri (the problem is that it was said by a subject of Argentine politics who liked to be called Néstor instead of Kirchner).

In this one recognizes that there is no indifference, that bond is not developed, that it is indifferent for political relations to which gender one individual or another belongs: it is a political subject, that is in essence what it is. In all this transformation there is a biological difference – at least until now – which is who is the bearer of the process of reproduction, of the gestation of the new individual. And that, from the point of view of the general social relationship, is a disadvantage in competition for women as sellers of labor power. Until human reproduction develops outside the body, this differentiation is present. Therefore, it cannot be eliminated as a biological difference: it can only be eliminated as a social difference, with respect to the organization of work. And one of the ways to eliminate this difference is equal maternity and paternity leave.

So from the point of view of the sale of labor power, the man has an advantage. It is unfortunate to have it, because when my children were born I had a day of paternity leave to go to the civil registry and register the child, but it is an advantage. From the point of view of capital no one is irreplaceable, but entertaining a worker who is continuously available, or having a worker who is going to interrupt her presence in the labor process because of motherhood is a competitive disadvantage. So, the indifferentiation with respect to this is the

movement of equal leave, which in the 70s was already developing in some countries: in Sweden there was the same leave (if I remember correctly it was 6 months), and in Argentina it is developing very slowly for the part of the workforce that sells it in what are nominally "normal conditions" (later we will see what "normal" means here).

[Alejandro asks (**1**) about the relationship between this indifferentiation and the abolition of gender and (**2**) if we are very far from this scientific regulation of biological reproduction].

[**1**] There are several things to this. With the transformations that are arising from the development of machinery in large-scale industry, what was hinted at when I compared life expectancy between 1820-1835, is now much longer. Again: with enormous differences in different areas, in some current ones you are lucky to live 30 years, one cannot abstractly universalize it, but in general development individual life has been substantially prolonged. The second issue is that infant mortality has fallen markedly, so the replacement... Apart from... It does not correspond to this point, but there are masses of the working population available in what Marx was looking at with respect to the development of machinery, which also means that labor power is available without resorting to biological reproduction (and then we will see what happens with the biological reproduction of the surplus population).

For a certain part of the working population in general, their participation in the process of biological reproduction is extremely limited: compared to families that had 6, 7 or 10 children, they have 1 or 2 children at most. So the role of biological difference is moving into the background, and then gender difference is also taking a back seat. And indeed, what is born of biological difference is erased for the life process in general. The question that remains is why the structure of the so-called "nuclear" family subsists (I am only announcing it, I am not going to develop it) when its reason arose to a large extent from two things: the process of biological reproduction itself and the process of production of the individual already born until he was in a position to sell his labor power (in the case of the working class). Why, if these functions are fulfilled in a much more diminished way, does the nuclear family of two people who live "separately" from the other people subsist? What function does this fulfill from the point of view of capital, why is it determined in this way? I have no answer beyond ...

Alejandro: The easy answer in Argentina is because you can't afford to pay the rent on your own [Laughs].

JIC: Here, the irony of the price of rents... Renting 5 can be cheaper than renting 2, because there is only one kitchen, one bathroom... That's relative. It is true that there is an expansion of what are called "single-person" households or something like that. But why is the bond of personal dependence that living together as a couple entails not fully dissolved?

[**2**] The other aspect is that of biological reproduction. Sexed reproduction has a potentiality that non-sexed reproduction lacks. It combines the genes of two

different individuals, which makes the ability of that species to transform itself. If the reproduction did not have that character... When they reproduce the sheep[187], that sheep has the traits of only one line and weakens the ability of that subject to transform and develop. On the one hand, if there is a process of reproduction that does not have direct intervention by people, we should think that it can only be overcome by a process that simulates sexual reproduction. It seems to me that in cloning that is far away... But the same in cloning, the process of gestation of the embryo, the fetus was inside an ordinary sheep. The same happens with cases of release of wombs in human beings. Now, it does not take away from the fact that gestation has to be inside a human body. [Alejandro clarifies that he was not referring to cloning, but to the development of the fetus outside a woman's body[188]].

I add another thing that is linked to the history of the nuclear family. As the human being is a living subject that takes a long time to develop – in relative terms – the fullness of his capacities, precisely because his capacities are the ability to work not as a simple process of animal transformation of the environment, he needs a lot of attention over a long period. And since there was no education outside the family environment, it fulfills that role. The more the roles of this family bond are dissolved, because there are fewer children and education is no longer in the hands of the family, but is essentially a process of a general "social" nature, not in the sphere of the bonds of personal dependence, why does the need for the immediate personal bond remain? I suppose it is part of the process that is dissolving.

[II][189]

[Ivan speaks of a work by Pashukanis where "(...) Morality appears as a relationship more or less linked to the production of commodities to the extent that the individual has to see the other free and equal as himself, and he associates it with something typical of capitalist societies, but he was struck by the fact that in a fairly extensive phase of the capitalist mode of production women were not recognizable as free and equal. What is the content of morality when it comes to the relationship between a free individual and an unfree woman? Pashukanis links it to hypocrisy, but it made a little noise to me."]

JIC: I would say that it is not hypocrisy. This is inconsistent after having proposed morality as a relation proper to the capitalist mode of production, it would be as if morality were natural and morality is being lacking. I would say that, to the extent that the condition of free individual of any subject as such is not recognized, and we saw how the bonds of personal dependence are dissolved even where there are bonds of personal dependence, and the appearance that these are links between free individuals (when at the same time they are not) is presented... This is very marked with the rights of children, which is to pretend that these

[187] Reference to the cloning of Dolly the sheep.
[188] They could have brought up the subject of artificial wombs.
[189] In this session we turn to the issue of child labour.

people who are not free individuals because they are not recognized as having the possibility of buying and selling commodities – a contract signed by a minor is legally considered "non-ascribed", it does not exist – however, in general but to apply within the personal bond, it appears as a relationship between free individuals who have even opposing rights.

One could say that it is hypocrisy because the appearance is that freedom is proclaimed and then there are personal differences. More than hypocrisy, it is that it is not recognized as a relationship between equals. In all that period that you were referring to, women are not recognized as equals, and so morality does not enter into the relationship, it is a relationship of personal dependence. In concrete movement, in practice, it is not a bond between free individuals. And many times it appears as the need to protect this individual because he does not have the attributes of the free individual, so you have to "protect" him and "protect" him, which can mean *hitting him* when the individual who says this feels like it. But in reality morality does not govern in that relationship. Thinking about it with what I said last time about religious marriages, it is not seen as hypocrisy, it is seen as that this is the custom, for the ideological justification of that relationship it is not offensive, it is an expression of strictly paternal affection towards the daughter.

When one looks at the general social relation, for those who enter directly into it—because those who do not, are not recognized as free individuals—there is no room for any kind of personal differentiation, every personal attribute is erased. So, to justify the differentiations, you have to put something that appears as a personal attribute, which is the color of the skin, the type of work you do... And that appears as irrational within what is the general social relation. But only through this can a differentiation be justified. And then the individual who is starving is because he is lazy: it is a personal attribute, it is not the relationship. And all this, in the face of the naturalization of the free individual, is seen as unnatural from the point of view of free individuals. Racism appears as an aberration because it introduces a personal attribute to justify differentiation. Now: one cannot reduce it to a question of hypocrisy. In order not to recognize equality to someone who really appears as equal, it is necessary to appeal to a natural differentiation, which comes up against the universal conception that there are no natural differences. I don't know what explanations the racists will give, because they are going to say that there is a natural difference. I don't know if there is anything about hypocrisy, it is what Marx said about everything being bought and sold, even morality, although I would say that what is bought is the immoral act.

Iván: What remains for me then is that in those bonds of personal dependence morality does not appear.

JIC: Morality does not mediate. They are mediated by what that concrete link is in concrete historical conditions, which can imply various things. What one does have to consider anyway is that these personal bonds increasingly take the form of bonds between free individuals, where morality appears: it is immoral to hit children. Because what happens is that the general social bond appears universalized even in the face of individuals who are not free at the moment. And that appears with this development of the capitalist mode of production where it

even extends with respect to the relations between human beings and animals, animal rights appear. Animals are not free, commodity-producing individuals, and yet the relationship between a human being and an animal begins to take the form of a relationship between two free individuals.

What follows in development is the issue of child labour. What it will essentially propose is the possibility of disposing of this labor power of an individual who has not yet developed his organism to be the full bearer of the productive forces of labor at that historical moment, and is directly incorporated into the production process. Capital "throws itself" on this labor power and puts it to work with all the brutality typical of the capitalist mode of production. There is an individual who will never be a free individual in his present condition because he cannot enter into the legal relationship of buyer and seller of commodity, therefore, the sale of his labor power will *always* appear mediated by his ties of personal dependence on the one who sells it. What is going to happen in this movement? Capital is going to begin to clash with that same exploitation. Again we have the total capital of society, the state as its political representative, and later Marx is going to propose the concrete way in which this develops, which is the struggle of the working class to restrict child labor. And a double need of capital will appear with respect to the restriction of child labor.

The first need is given by the premature exhaustion of the child labor force. When the workers who have started working at the age of 3-4 reach the moment when they would have the fullness of their productive attributes, they already have their labor power exhausted. And capital comes up against this exhaustion, depriving itself of having labor power with full productive attributes. And this is where Marx is going to make the reference that it is going to appear as a matter of "human rights" not to be exploited early. In any case, in the development this first law restricting child labor will appear, from 1833 if I remember correctly, which cannot be applied. And Marx is going to refer to another law of 1842 or 1844, on the restriction of child and female labor, which is the first law that will be effectively applied.

The second need of capital will have to do with the very materiality of the labor process. And it is that, while work is manual, the productive skills, knowledge, and awareness to be able to do it can only be acquired by working. And when we looked at manual labor, Marx's reference to the individual who is tied to a partial task for life appeared. With the development of machinery one cannot learn to work by working, the materiality of work no longer depends on the practical knowledge acquired by the individual by doing manual work. Now it is necessary for the workers to arrive at the labor process already with certain general productive attributes. Let's stop at this.

The future worker begins the formation of his labor power in the limited bond of the family. And the skill that he is going to have to develop in the process of production with the system of machinery, the circumstances of his work in that process, is that he has to cooperate with a collective worker made up of a number of individuals. So, the first thing you have to learn is to work collectively.

The other determination that is going to play out here with respect to the need to have learned certain general skills is going to be given with the acceleration of technical change, where—to put it in the terms that appear in *Capital*—the worker is no longer going to be tied for life to a specific partial task. Now the worker is going to enter the production process and throughout his life he is going to find that the technical conditions of production change substantially, that it may arise that the branch he entered no longer exists and he has to go to a new one. And what the total capital of society requires is a worker who has *certain* universal capacities that allow him the plasticity to face changing technical conditions, who can change more or less fluidly from one to another. And that plasticity is obtained with knowledge, with the process of formal education.

One has cursed why one has had to study certain things that did not interest him in the least in his training process. What is at stake is to produce an individual who has a certain universality. And the more you have, the less "alien" the area where you are going to have to develop. The individual who only knows a part-time job is taken out of that job and everyone else is alien to him. The individual who has a certain degree of universality passes into another field and although it is not so well known, it is not totally alien to him. And this is acquired with the extension of the formal education process. So, it is not simply that capital is prematurely liquidating the future labor power, but also that because of the materiality of labor, it is necessary for the worker to pass through educational training to the process of effective production. And the more technical change accelerates and the more universality is demanded of that worker, the more time he needs to be developing his productive subjectivity within this process of formal education.

To put it in more immediate terms: what is the first thing one learns when one starts going to school? That he has to be in a process of collective work, which implies a certain schedule, and that someone who coordinates that process of collective work who has the authority, the power to dominate it. And that is the learning to have the ability to work in the factory of large industry. To this is added the need for the worker to have these relatively universal capacities, and consequently to remain in the educational process longer. All this slows down the early incorporation of the child labor force into the production process.

And there Marx goes on to state that capital is "egalitarian" by nature, and that when the restriction of child labor is placed in one branch, the capitals of that branch come out to demand that the restrictions be present in all the other branches of production: they demand equal right to exploitation, which is moral. When Marx makes this observation about the 1833 law, what he is going to mark is the argument presented by the capitalists as to why this restriction on child labor is inadmissible, and the argument is that the minors work as assistants to the elderly, who need them because they work 16 hours a day. And it is very notable in this law that the limitation of the use of child labor refers to the fact that they cannot be more than 14 hours a day in the factory or more than 12 hours working. And this appears as a restriction on the number of hours worked, and the argument of the capitalists, which refers to an even longer working day than what is intended to be regulated. [...] In the contradictory character of the capitalist

mode of production, it prematurely annihilates labor power while it can, and only stops doing so when it threatens its own valorization.

What does neoclassical economics propose (at any moment we are going to go to Milei saying the same thing, because they say it for other aspects) regarding the prohibition of child labor? I always make a reference to something that is public and notorious that neoclassical economics raises regarding the existence of unemployment insurance, which in Argentina was used as an argument in the 90s for labor flexibility and now continues to be used. That in reality it decreases social welfare, because in its definition the maximization of social welfare consists in the fact that no one can improve his total utility (dispose of more commodities) without diminishing the total well-being of other members of society (the Pareto optimum), and then he states that the individual who receives unemployment insurance, He maximizes his leisure because he is not working, and at the same time he has an income without sacrificing his leisure to obtain it. But since you have to take from somewhere what you are going to be given as unemployment insurance, there is another one that decreased your total well-being because they took that part to cover the insurance. This argument was used in parliamentary discussions on the subject and is used with respect to severance pay.

But neoclassical economics rarely expresses its opinion on child labor. In 2001 I did a job for UNICEF that I had been asked to do because of the discussions about the causes of child labor[190], and the UNICEF official who commissioned it wanted me to discuss it with neoclassical economists, and those UNICEF economists who were neoclassical. So I started looking for the basics on the internet at that time and it was impossible for me to find a reference about child labor. I consulted an encyclopedia on labor economics, I think of 8 volumes, from an American university. And not a word appeared. Finally, I found a work by two authors (I don't even make the effort to remember) who proposed this: the leisure of the children of the poor family (because for neoclassical economics there are no workers, there are "poor", it is a state of nature) is a luxury good for the poor family. Because they do not have enough to eat, and with the "leisure" of the children they (that is what they call them to go to school) has a very low marginal utility compared to the income that the child could obtain. So, prohibiting child labor (and they say it with these letters) *decreases* the well-being of the poor family, because it forces them to consume something that for them is a luxury good and deprives them of consuming "basic" commodities.

Absolute miserability for calling that the children to be in school instead of working, but even more so because one has seen an idle child in life. Therefore, child labor is a problem, a decision of the poor family, not of the capitalist mode of production. And to complete this miserability they go one step further. There are two useful functions: that of the child and that of the family (personified by the parents). And then there are altruistic parents who prefer to sacrifice the welfare of the family but benefit the welfare of the children and send them to school, and selfish parents who prefer to maximize the welfare of the family at the expense of minimizing that of the children, and send them to work. So you look at two

[190] Later published as *Child Labor and Capital*.

individuals... It was a time when the academic situation in the United States was more comfortable than now, but anyway... Surely they were both doctors in economics. How can one be so miserable as to write such an argument? To quote Serrat: between those guys and me there is something personal, it seems to me a thing of absolute personal misery.

Daiana: In what we were talking about, are leisure and education the same?

JIC: For neoclassical economics, yes. If one does the construction of neoclassical economics one has to come to that conclusion. And that is what is considered ideological production, and that is used – I take the dismissal because there is concrete experience of that. We have to remember that in the city of Buenos Aires it has been proposed that instead of having the possibility of advancing in the development of formal education, what high school students have to do is go to take classes so that they can see how they work, and do internships at McDonald's (I suppose that to see how hamburgers are made, because much more is not possible...). And on television an individual was heard complaining about the misfortune of not being able to hire minors because in Argentina the work of minors under 16 years of age is illegal. What poor people, because he wanted and was willing to give them work, but with this legislation he couldn't. So, this is in the practical consciousness of the capitalist class. In a society in which the conditions of reproduction and production of labor power are deteriorating, these statements appear crudely.

There is a contrast with this that should be seen now in the US. I have an article that I collected for this work from an American business magazine (I don't remember if it was *BusinessWeek*), where it was asked whether an 18-year-old high school student entering work would not be a case of child labor. Then we are going to look at why; the scope that Marx has is a primary education and thank you, but then it has become much longer processes. What I was proposing is that if an 18-year-old high school graduate, who may have had a job before, such as delivering newspapers – he is the image of the Yankees – or a summer job, is going to enter a regular 8-hour job, he will not be able to continue developing his productive skills with a university education.

Then it begins to appear that the condition for the full development of the productive attributes of the labor force includes university education. And it appears in that magazine expressing a need for the total capital of society within that national space. When it was Tony Blair's Labour government (at least in name) in England, the project that was had for the university was that 50% of the population would have passed through the university level. Then that disappeared and access to university was increasingly restricted, but that shows what happens with the transformations of what a worker is.

[Iván asks what neoclassicists think of as "childhood", if it exists for them. And another question is what did UNICEF economists think when they read their book on child labor.]

JIC: I'll answer the second one because it's easier: there was no resolution because this technique was kicked out. The work was divided into two parts, first that I did this whole report... She was a sociologist who had a problem that was... What is the explanation given for why there is child labor? Because there are no schools. So they set up the schools and the children continue to go to work. So they said that it is because there is an alternative to work, and then the productive process must be taken out of that place. They take them out and then now the children go further to work. So they say that it is that parents do not realize the importance of children going to school. And then we do a campaign to make parents aware of the importance of education. And they continue to go to work. Then, he said: all explanations end... I want an explanation that goes beyond what we are seeing to discuss with UNICEF economists. This was at the end of 2001, and the discussion was supposed to be in March and it didn't happen because she had been kicked out. I thought the work with UNICEF was dead and I published the work as a book, with development.

Iván: Were you thinking about that problem for any specific country or region or was it general?

JIC: They were clear that it was a general problem, that they had no explanation as to why in certain places it was impossible to eradicate child labor. As it was intended to argue with economists who are not like these two who... except for those who have the ideological role of defending that there is no coverage for unemployment, that wages go down... The economist in general is a technician who handles a series of things and his theoretical training is something that is more or less nebulous.

So what I did was the same thing we are doing here: starting from the simplest determinations and moving forward on the specificity of child labor until we arrive at another... I used the product of another work I had done on cotton production in the Chaco[191], showing that in the history of cotton production (at that time it was already replaced), manual harvesting was sustained by child labor. That if they had to hire, even with the poverty of an adult's salary and with the productivity of an adult, compared to what the presence of child labor implied, that they did not have their own salary, that they added to the production of the adult... That without the presence of child labor, capital could not be valued. And also analyzing, if I remember correctly, something that even so and all manual work was being displaced by the incorporation of machinery. That in seventy pages, very condensed, but the idea was not to put the extraction of surplus value (when I published it I already changed some things) so that economists would not be frightened and have to discuss. But it was still useless.

Daiana: That case includes exploitation, massacres as well...

JIC: The history and the present of that is... Now it is more visible because of the trial of the Napalpí massacre, in which my brother[192] was a witness, because he

[191] Iñigo Carrera, J. (2000), "Cotton production in the Argentine Northeast and its perspectives in the international market". Federal Investment Council.

[192] Nicolás Iñigo Carrera.

worked a lot on the Chaco. And one does not know if it is on another scale, but the occupation of the territory continues to take place, the use of that labor force, and if that labor force is no longer useful but the land where they are settled is, then the displacement... Where the appeal to natural differences appears, something that in the capitalist mode of production seems that it could not be done, and yet it is the basis for differentiation. And then in Patagonia with the Mapuche it is the same contradiction, where there is the defense of private property, but when the Mapuche are given as community property a territory that was part of the military barracks in Bariloche, horror, because it is private property. But the same ones who are outraged because private property is being violated, when they see that the individual, on the basis of the process of "natural" differentiation, private property itself frightens them. But hey, they are the concrete forms of capital accumulation.

Alejandro: The conclusions that are kind of kicked with UNICEF, did they fire her for contacting you, Juan [Laughs]?

JIC: No, I don't think she was fired for that, not at all. I suppose he would be a critical person of what UNICEF was doing. And I know that the boss fired her, they didn't renew her contract or anything like that and they fired her. I suppose that would be that, simply having an intolerable critical attitude to the cultivation of UNICEF appearances.

Regarding the other aspect of the question [about childhood that Iván asked], I have the impression that in particular in neoclassical economics, the figure of the child has this double thing. On the one hand, all neoclassical economics is founded on the rational individual who pursues the maximization of his total utility by balancing marginal utilities (and he says that this is natural). So what about the child? If I were neoclassical, I would say that the problem with the child is that he has very imperfect information, he lacks information and can make mistakes when he is making the decision. But by nature he is selfish and chooses to maximize his well-being. Because in the purity of neoclassical economics – it is nonsense, and that is why they cannot explain it – when a mother breastfeeds her child, what is at stake is an exchange relationship. When you tell them that there is no price there, they have no answer, but for them it is in the nature of every human relationship to pursue the maximization of well-being. I don't know about the Austrians... His explanation of value is the same: utility and scarcity (so for me they are part of neoclassical economics the same as Keynes, because it is utility and scarcity). So the value is natural because there are always these two things. But they do not propose the rational individual. In other words, they raise something about the organization of action, but it is not homo *oeconomicus* —which is the figure of the rational individual in the economy—a figure that they do not recognize. But from the point of view of neoclassical economics, yes, the child is the same as the adult in terms of leisure/income choice.

Pedro [Chat]: And why is neoclassical economics with such absurdity so widespread as a way of thinking?

JIC: The simple answer is because it is the full expression of commodity fetishism. In classical economics, the naturalization of value still mediates human productive activity. Labor by nature produces value, and therefore, it is an exchangeable object. But first there is that it is a product of human labor. In neoclassical economics it is utility and scarcity, it is in the body of the "good". Walras literally says it like this: utility is natural and scarcity is natural. It is the fullness of fetishistic consciousness in the form of a scientific consciousness, because there is a method that leads to this conclusion. And that fetishistic consciousness erases all bonds...

I also go back to this: in Smith and Ricardo, the relationships between individuals are antagonistic. Smith sums it up when he says that one cannot expect the goodness of the baker, the brewer, the butcher, to be provided with these three things. What he has to do to satisfy his own personal interest is to appeal to the personal interest of the other. This is a war of all against all in which there is an "invisible hand" that brings forth the general welfare. I have already mentioned that for Smith the workers have the upper hand because the capitalists do associate and the laws support them. And in Ricardo the antagonistic relationship between capitalist and worker (and of both with the landowner) appears openly.

So, there are those who argue that neoclassical economics was born to answer Marx, but they had no *idea* who Marx was. Its founders are more or less contemporaries of Marx, there are previous proposals that neoclassical economics later systematized. There is only one neoclassical contemporary of Marx who writes some reference praising him [Marx] in front of Ricardo, because he says that at least – I don't remember the terms well – he has an explanation. It is Wagner, the one with the *Marginal Notes*, and Marx is indignant saying that he did not understand anything, that what he proposes is the opposite of what Ricardo proposes. This was born because classical economics itself gave rise to the Ricardian economists, who continue to exist and abound in the Argentine national state. They will never talk about surplus value, what they say is that profit is a deduction, that the worker is exploited because a part of the product of his labor is deducted from him. And this is what Ricardo proposes. But what Marx says is that the worker is exploited because he is *forced* to work more than necessary to reproduce himself. It is not a problem of income distribution, it is a problem of how production is organized.

What does neoclassical economics do, what does it do to the Pareto welfare optimum? That any action that increases the well-being of one and decreases that of another, takes society out of the optimum of well-being, decreases social welfare. So, no one has to have an antagonistic relationship with anyone. Each one looks at the commodities and says: this one is useful to me or not and to such a degree; It is a problem that one solves "at home" and has no link with anyone. And what happens is that when this is manifested in the market, all the decisions of how each one thinks he is going to maximize his total well-being (adjusted to his "budget constraint") converge, automatically resulting from this the price of commodities (which is the same as value). That price, as each one maximized their total well-being within what they could, no one has anything to claim from others, has no relationship with others. So every attempt to establish a relationship that involves

a bond with others is unnatural. Then, of course, when the crisis comes, all the neoclassicists come to demand that there be direct links and save the capitalists. But this is the discourse. So, there is no reason to have a relationship.

And the second issue is that when they look at what corresponds to each one, why some have a larger or smaller budget constraint, it will be argued that the capitalist sacrifices himself by postponing his consumption, because marginal utility decreases as the moment of consumption moves away. So, as you seek to maximize your total well-being... Otherwise, Mr. Ford would have eaten the nuts, the sheets, and would not have put his production... We are going to see later the figure of the abstinent capitalist of Marx's time, and that he no longer appears like that, but from a neoclassical that is Marshall, he says that it is not that he abstains, but that he waits, he sacrifices himself to consume, and in exchange he naturally corresponds to receive interest, and work is remunerated according to his productivity. What it produces... Capital there is a subject, it is the inversion of this social relation, of the objectification of people and the subjectivation of things...

So, neoclassical economics takes that concrete form and says that capital is a subject that produces. The land is a subject that produces, so is work, and each one is entitled to remuneration according to his productivity. But neither the land produces, nor the machines produce: they are means used by the only subject that enters the process of production, which is the human subject, the only *factor* that makes production is human labor. But for neoclassical economics, factors of production are capital, land and labor. And by a wonderful statistical function it turns out that labor is always paid for its marginal productivity, so workers never have anything to claim, otherwise they would be violating the natural law that no one has a relationship with anyone. Pareto's approach to well-being corresponds to this: no one has a relationship with anyone, therefore no one has the right to keep a part of the product that corresponded to another of these fantastic subjects: the machines, the screws, the tweezers... Here too, the Austrians have some difference, and the *very* Keynesian ones too (not the normal ones, because they adhere to neoclassical approaches absolutely). Axel Kicillof's Keynesians argue that Keynes has a theory of value that is not that of neoclassical economics. But ultimately what plays there is the subjectivity of individuals.

Iván: For the neoclassicalists, is labor power a commodity?

JIC: There is no labor power for neoclassical economics, what exists is "labor" as a factor of production. They cannot differentiate what is a commodity from something that is not. For them, what determines whether a commodity (an "economic good") is utility and scarcity. So, when you ask them about the mother breastfeeding a child, what do you do, do you forgive the price? Why is that priceless? One has few opportunities to ask it, but they have no answer, because everything that is useful and scarce has a price.

Iván: But there the work does have a price.

JIC: For them it is not a price.

Iván: I'm reading a lot of treatises on labor law, and labor activists confront each other all the time and say that labor is not a commodity, and they fight with the neoliberals, and now I come to learn that not even the neoliberals defend this.

JIC: For them it is not even a good. For neoclassical economics, every individual comes into the world not with a loaf of bread under his arm, but with a good that is leisure. What is leisure? One would say lying on my belly all day. It is a scarce commodity because one can only be lying around for 24 hours. But the problem is that the only good that this individual has, and needs other commodities, which for that individual have a much higher marginal utility than that of leisure, because he has a lot of leisure and does not have the "income" (this is the explanation that corresponds to the worker). So, work is a sacrifice of that natural good that it has, which is leisure, it has to exchange it for an income. A point of equilibrium is made of the individual by maximizing his total well-being, equalizing, balancing the utility of the leisure that he has left with that of the commodities he is receiving in return.

That is the proposal. So, it is not possible to speak of the individual selling the work. I don't know, because then neoclassical economists such as... I only met one once who, when you asked him these things, tried to answer it in terms of neoclassical economics and at a certain point he said: I can't answer this, you're right. And what was a candidate to be a theorist of neoclassical economics ended up resigning from the faculty, he said: I can't continue to teach students by asking them these things. And he didn't have the need to try to answer himself beyond that, and he became a coach, I guess very good. I was able to confirm this from people who could not believe that he was the best neoclassical economist I had ever known, strongly embittered personally.

Iván: In that development as far as I followed you... That individual could not be exchanging his leisure, because what he is going to put in check is his work.

JIC: That's why he's sacrificing his leisure in exchange for commodities. Work is the negation of leisure, it is a sacrifice of leisure.

Ivan: The same as business...

JIC: But here it is positive, because here the individual reaches a higher curve of indifference in his fantasies than if he kept all the leisure and had no other good. So, it is not that the work is sold. Labor is a factor of production. Factors of production are sold: land, capital, labor. When the condemnation of labor activists appears, in general, it is not because labor is not a commodity because what it is, is labor power, it is a moral condemnation that it cannot be that a human being has to sell his personality... I believe, from the vague memories I have of labor law that I had to study once, that [they say that] it is unfair that an individual has to sell his work because it is what makes human dignity, and he is obliged to sell his dignity.

Iván: Yes, they make a development like this, they also confuse salaried work with work in general, the private labor of a doctor... It's all work and... They deny that labor is a commodity that can be exchanged, they are against having a price

and that there is an exchange between worker and capitalist, they analyze it as a benefit, which is given for... And they associate it with human dignity and such. They also don't have a systematic explanation, they are loose paragraphs... And very ideologues, yes. Many think that with labor law exploitation ends, they would say that simply that it is regulated, it would imply that there is no agreement of wills between private parties but that the contract is already given by a state law.

JIC: Well, it's the conscience of a labor lawyer who comes out in defense... On the other hand, there is another type of labor lawyer (in Argentina, Funes de Rioja) who, if they have any foundation, is totally neoclassical. All the arguments that [...][193] Labor agreements, collective bargaining agreements, clauses appear that reflect the neoclassical foundation that says that there will be an increase in wages if there is an increase in productivity. And what we have in front of us is that the worker is not paid for the productivity of his labor but for the value of his labor power. And this appears in the agreements.

Neoclassical economics is the full apologetics of the capitalist mode of production: this is natural, it is "the best of all worlds" and not even "possible",[194] it is the best world there can be. And Marx makes this distinction between classical economics where he says that they are still looking for the explanation of what is in front of them, and vulgar economics that are only trying to justify the grossest appearances of the capitalist mode of production to present them as natural conditions of human life. This is what neoclassical economics does. What happens to those who study neoclassical economics? There is a part that are those who are going to be ideologues of capital, who learn this part of the discourse, and then the great mass of economists – at least in Argentina... I think it's universal, because the contradictions it has make it very difficult to have a coherent education—it learns a series of techniques of... Why the math and models? Because they are techniques that will later be applied to the management of the total capital of society, and therefore of relations with the state, representing individual capitals. And all this foundation was erased, in the end it ends up being irrelevant. But at the same time, these individuals were disarmed from the possibility of developing a critical consciousness, because it is already full of all these constructions.

Neoclassical economics, then, is the purest form of the ideology of capital. The Austrian economy is this brought to a fullness that later when they apply it... this man, I don't know if Hayek or Mises, advising the economic reform in Chile, to the Chilean state, was not like... that flows in the life of society with the individuals who decide and so on: it was the exercise of physical violence to impose certain conditions of valorization of capital. For the normal management of the total capital of society, this goes to an extreme that cannot work, it can only serve for a purely ideological discourse. Neoclassicalism, mixed with Keynesianism, serve both.

Iván [Chat]: Of course, so for them it is amoral that the child is not a subject of rights and therefore, a legal person. The child should be a legal person from birth.

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[193] The connection is cut.
[194] Reference to Leibniz's famous phrase.

But if this is the case, the workforce could degrade prematurely. Are they an expression of the alienated consciousness of the individual capitalist?

JIC: Indeed, one can look at it like that. But the question of whether it is the expression of his alienated consciousness... The individual capitalist in general has a vulgar conscience, he does not care about the things he says, his discourse is that here no one wants to work, they are all lazy. And what neoclassical economics does is build a whole thing for it, but the individual capitalist does not need it to continue affirming this. The ideological discourse of the management of capital and the state and the reproduction of this consciousness do need a body of social labor that permanently reproduces the formation of new consciousnesses in these conditions. When we get to Volume 3 – or at this rate, when you get to Volume 3 – we are going to see that Marx says all the time that this is how the capitalist and his ideologue, the economist, are presented. It is not that they invent things that do not exist: it is that the individual capitalist takes what he sees, takes on the immediate appearance, and the ideologue embellishes it as a foundation. It is one of the necessary forms that the movement of capital takes in the sphere of relations between personifications: in the class struggle, in the relationship of citizenship, in the state.

Iván [Chat]: My association with the "individual capitalist" is related to the fact that the state as a representative of total capital does not consider the child as a subject of rights.

JIC: Regarding this, it depends on how much and on what individual capitalist. When it has become a normal condition for that individual capitalist that the child has to come through the process of formal education, and therefore cannot exploit it before that, he thinks it is very good that the children go to school. When he faces the process in which it is said that now in addition to primary school he has to go to secondary school, at the immediate moment, as is the traffic, he resists. When this has become the normal condition and the individual capitalist *feels it* as such, because he does not find the worker who has the productive attributes that he demands because he does not have the educational training he needs, then he becomes the champion of education.

In Argentina there was an expression that has already disappeared, but I think it is useful because it is also the one who decides what the content and form of formal education should be. Why, from the point of view of the working class, as a relative undifferentiated, is it the state that should govern the orientation, the development of formal education? And why is it that for a working class that is strongly fragmented and differentiated in the degree of development of its productive attributes, this no longer appears as a necessity? On the contrary, what appears is the need for a differentiated education. And how for the individual worker — in any case, but especially in the first — he is presented with the contradictory question that as a worker in general, as a member of the working class, he needs universal education, but as a worker who sells labor power he can benefit from a specific education.

The concrete experience of this (I saw it very markedly) is in Argentina, when the process of more intense industrial development came, the need for the industrial secondary school appeared[195], and a law was put in place by which all the capital of the industrial sector had to pay a tax that was directly assigned to the financing of the national technical schools. In national technical education there are a whole series of branches: master builder (for civil works), electricity, mechanics... And the law establishes a special condition for those capitals that set up their own technical education school. So, the capital with enough scale to do this... Very remarkably they were... Ford, which orients education to automotive production, and incorporates the best graduates of its own school (they are all free, in Argentina we assume that national, public education is). And so, the worker who comes out of the training of the industrial school has to have a certain universality, and if he is a mechanic he cannot be so only for the automobile industry, but for the entire industry called "metal-mechanics". So, you need training that allows you to also go to work in the household appliances, etc. So, from the point of view of the interest of the working class, there is an interest in universal education. What happens to the worker? Ford was very selective. The worker knows that if he has this specialized training, he will find a buyer for his labor force. So, this contradiction appears. The other industrial school with a lot of prestige was Philips, which produced electrical technicians, which was what it needed. And it did the same thing as the Ford. Now it no longer exists, but Ford does, although it is now a private school, there is no longer a tax on technical education, it is not part of the structure of industrial schools (which are not national either, they are provincial now).

So this appears in the discussion of who has to guide education. One discourse says: the businessmen have to intervene (they don't say "capitalists", they are adorned so that it is not so unpleasant) they have to intervene because they know what the future worker has to know and the needs that exist about education. And this is what consecrates the city of Buenos Aires now with the obligation to do unpaid internships in private companies. From the point of view of the working class it is not that, because it needs to be universal in order to find a buyer for its labor power. So, when it is discussed who has to guide education, whether the political representatives of the working class or of the capitalists, this confrontation arises: some need universal training, others need to be trained for their specific production, they need there to be a more or less large mass to have plasticity, but there is no interest from that point of view in universal education. With the differentiation with respect to what type of labor force capital needs, which goes from the need for relatively undifferentiated workers to strongly differentiated workers, what appears is the privatization of education and the differentiation in training.

The best synthesis I had on this was given to me by a student at the National University of General Sarmiento. Where I, in a fairly initial course whose axis was a bit of classical economics (Smith, Ricardo), and I put a little bit of neoclassical economics so that they would have the contrast, and then it was Volume 1 of *Capital*. At this point I made these questions and this student told me: what you are

[195] The equivalent of vocational training in Spain.

saying is what the teacher of ... I don't know if it was "civic instruction",[196] which trained us to be employees, and those of the country school are trained to be executives. And I told him: that's exactly what you're saying. This differentiation then appears: there is no more universal formation.

And this is what one has in front of you when you argue... The problem is not that the privatization of education implies the "commodification" of what is produced, because what is produced in the educational system is a commodity to be sold: labor power. What changes is what content that production is going to have: who is going to govern, to personify where that education is headed. From the point of view of the working class it must always aim at universality and undifferentiation, individual capitals are not interested.

I would like to return to one aspect of this here to start next time. What is going to appear to us is what Marx develops about the material and "moral" wear and tear (it is an ironic term) of machinery. We are going to dwell on this question (which has much sharper expressions today than in Marx's time) because it will force us to look again at the determination of the value of commodities. And there are some proposals derived from Marxism regarding an abolition of the determination of the value of commodities by socially necessary abstract labor. And we would be in a position to enter point 4.

[Alejandro asks how capital determines what a man/woman/child is]

Up to this point, there is simply a differentiation of biological basis that takes social forms of differentiation, even for the men of the working class, being determined as free individuals first for private legal relations and then for political ones, differentiated before women. The social forms of differentiation are present, they are born from historical determinations of previous social forms. And the biological one plays a central role. [...] When we look more at the development of what a human being is in the determination by capital and the transformations of the capitalist mode of production, it is the point at which one can dwell more on the concrete determinations of each subject of social life.

b) *Extension of the working day.*

We were going to see this question that Marx unfolds of the consequences for the worker. And one of them that we are going to see now is the extension of the working day.

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[196] Alejandro asks him in the chat if the subject is "construction of citizenship". JIC responds: "Maybe. I don't remember the term he used. but that memory remained with me; I associated it with a process of consciousness formation. It was not mathematics, language, history or geography, but something like that that referred to the production of the very subjectivity of the students." It seems to refer to something similar to the subjects of "Education for Citizenship" and "Ethics" in Spain.

We have already seen the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery. Machinery implies an outlay of capital and the possibility of increasing the productivity of labor and relative surplus value. And the first thing that is going to happen in this movement is that the capitalists as the personification of capital are going to try to keep the machine running for as long as possible, and consequently there is going to be a tendency to extend the working day. The concrete way in which this need is going to be presented to the capitalist to use the machinery as *intensely* as possible is linked to the fact that he has disbursed an amount of capital that the machine is going to transfer to the value of the production as it is used. But if the machine is not in operation, it also loses use value due to the natural processes to which it is subjected. So, in the first place, its wear and tear in production intensifies, but it will recover in the value of the commodity produced, and there is a second wear and tear without compensation that has to do with the non-use of machinery, which is irrecoverable in the value of the commodities not produced. Consequently, this impulse to extend the working day appears to keep the machine in use and avoid as much as possible that the machine loses value while it is not being used.

Marx is going to add a second (or third, depending on how you look at it) form of wear and tear of machinery, there is going to be an wear and tear that has to do with the social form that the machine and the product of labor have: what Marx is going to call "moral wear and tear." This means that the machine, although it does not lose its value of material use, does lose its value; And that moral wear and tear can occur due to 2 circumstances.

(1) That there is the same machine, but the productivity of the labor that made it has increased, and the value of that machine has decreased. The capitalist has a machine that was worth $100, and now it has a value of $80. I'm going to take this one more so I can develop determination and then I'll come back to the second one.

What is the labor that determines the value of commodities? There is a machine that is now worth $80 instead of $100, and it has to transfer its value to that of the product. Suppose the machine can produce 100 units: it must transfer $1 to the value of each unit of product, or it must transfer $0.80. And here what is at stake is this form of the capitalist mode of production of allocation of social labor, where the recognition of what is socially useful is established indirectly through the expression of SNALdPaI as the value of commodities. So, we must now recognize that dead labor, and we have already seen that constant capital transfers its value to the product because we must recognize whether that labor that was already recognized by the capitalist who bought the machine as socially necessary, materialized in the product, is still socially necessary labor or not. And here the recognition is made on the basis of what is socially necessary *today*, how much work is needed today to be able to have that machine in the production process.

And socially necessary labor is now represented at $80 and not $100. And the expression of this is going to be that it is not simply the socially necessary labor to produce, but to *reproduce* the commodity. This "reproduction" is not abstract in relation to what the present is: it is whether *today* that machine is in a condition to be produced and available according to the technique of greater productivity of

labor or not. If today you can produce the machine that was worth $100 to $80, and today you can put that machine into production by paying a constant capital of $80, the value that the old machine is going to transfer to each unit will no longer be the $100 at the time it was produced, but the $80. the proportional part of the machine's remaining value. So, the machine is going to suffer this ironically called "moral" wear and tear because it refers to the value of the machine: it is going to have lost a part of its value even though it is materially intact. This is the simplest form of moral attrition. I give the second form and then return to the question of what is meant by the abstract labour socially necessary to *reproduce* the commodity and what *it does not* mean.

2) The second is a more complex way because now there is a machine that may have cost even more than the one that was being used, that instead of $100 has cost $110. But this machine allows such an increase in the productivity of labor that what corresponded to the $1 transferred by the other of its value per unit, in this machine corresponds, let's say, to $0.80. So, the old machine that cost $100 versus the new $110 machine but transfers $0.80, lost a part of that ability to represent value. The calculation in this is more complex, but the effect is this moral exhaustion, it lost part of its value.

[...] I'm going to make a little digression. If one looks at it in Marx's time, one must think that Marx speaks of a ten-year cycle that appears linked to the useful life of machinery. And in the criterion of individual capital management, it is considered that those ten years are normal. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the speed of technical change is very great compared to history, and it is nothing compared to today's technical change. And then, it appears a moral wear and tear that is present but that has a much smaller scope than today. The case is very visible in computer microprocessors, where the moral wear and tear is much faster than the material life of the processor. This computer that I have in front of me has something like 9 years of material wear and tear, but its moral wear and tear is absolute. The productivity of work that for a certain type of work implies a computer equivalent to this (if I remember correctly, it is an i5), has an abyss of difference. And then the question of moral exhaustion arises, especially not on the basis of the first form of moral exhaustion (that the same thing is cheaper now), but... On the basis that in general—it was observed at one time, I don't know if it is still the case—each generation of processors, the value was the same as in the previous one, but it had doubled the potential it had to increase the productivity of labor[197]. And that happens in a much shorter period of 5 years. Therefore, the moral wear and tear of this type, that it is not cheaper but has a much higher productivity, is an issue that is fully valid.

What appears at the same time linked to this is when we see that the capitalist who incorporated innovation what he pursues is extraordinary surplus value by selling below the social value and above the individual value. And then, it is assumed that when this technique is generalized, it is sold for its value. And here what appears is that in a time less than the material useful life of the chip, when that chip is still being sold for its value, and above its individual value, and... If the

[197] He is probably referring to Moore's law or Bell's law (its updated version).

way in which its value is realized ultimately includes that for a time it is sold below what its original value was—but which is determined by moral attrition—how does the capitalist who develops the chip keep the extraordinary surplus value, and also recover the value of his capital? that his capital returns, lest the extraordinary surplus value even compensate him for the turnover of capital because it has been morally worn out and has not yet recovered its value?

This seems to me to be a matter of great relevance because of the speed and form of technical change. Where, in addition, the capitalist who produces the chip is not the one who uses it: he is the producer of the machinery that will generate an extraordinary surplus value to the user of said machinery. How does this extraordinary surplus value be appropriated between the capitalist who developed the machinery and the one who is going to innovate in the use of the machinery? When one looks historically at the development of machinery, in the nineteenth century, what appears in many cases is that the capitalist who makes the technical innovation is the same one who later uses the machinery. Nowadays with the development of the division of labor, *this* is generally not the case.

Alejandro: How long can the capitalist have to recover the value of that commodity over time? 1 year? 6 months?

JIC: There was a calculation on regularity, I don't remember how much it was but every 4 or 5 years.

Alejandro: We may not realize this moral wear and tear in the domestic sphere, but a company that uses a server and has to coordinate the production of a plant, and the different machines that operate... You will notice.

JIC: Yes... As an individual consumer, you also notice it, because with cell phones it appears very markedly that with a speed that is greater than the material useful life, it begins to lose functions, or the software update has run out... There is a generation of cell phones that every year run out of useful life to be able to use WhatsApp. And in general, the programs are getting so heavy that the old processor can no longer handle it, the storage capacity runs out... So, it is seen throughout the chain, beyond the "moral exhaustion" of the person when they have the phone that is not the latest model, but we are going to see that when we look at the reproduction of the workforce. Then there is even a material impossibility of continuing to use something that has a material useful life, which has not been exhausted, but cannot continue to function.

[Alejandro mentions planned obsolescence in the chat]

It appears with a link with this. But sometimes... I'm old enough to have heard throughout my life the phrase of someone who leans on the fender of the car, and pushes and the fender doesn't sink, and then the car appeared that when you hit it half hard, it sinks. And it sinks more and more easily. And it is linked to the fact that they sold you a piece of crap so that you have to buy a new one. With technical development, what is happening is that it begins to be worthless due to moral wear and tear to extend the material useful life of objects; in general machinery, in

Argentina the classic example is that of the refrigerator[198] that lasted 20-30 years, and no refrigerator today lasts so long. Beyond the "planned" obsolescence, it begins to appear that it does not make sense for material life to last longer than what its moral life will be worth.

And the second effect that plays there (which we will see later) is what role individual consumption plays – also in what we will later see as the "representation expenses" of capital – in the production of a certain labor power, the consumption of certain use values that exhaust their moral life very quickly, beyond their material life. Why from the point of view of capital it appears as a waste to be making a product that when it could still be used by the worker, is no longer useful, because materially it is useless, and to say that they are going to sell it again (from the point of view of the total capital of society) does not make sense, and from the point of view of competition between individual capitals it appears with a meaning. But why is there the need from the point of view of the worker, what consciousness, what productive subjectivity is produced through the so-called "planned obsolescence"? And this is from the point of view of the total capital of society, not from the point of view of individual capitals. What human subject is produced through this, what attributes does it have from the point of view of capital? We will also leave that to see when we get to the problems of how the labor force is produced.

The other thing I wanted to raise is this role of socially necessary labor to *reproduce* the commodity. There are proposals, very present today, linked to the development of computing, that for example producing a computer program, it is difficult to make the first version, the original. Then, at one time it cost a floppy disk [referring to making copies of the original], then it cost a CD, and then nothing, an internet transmission. And then a whole series of proposals appear within Marxism regarding the fact that value can no longer be considered the labor that produces the commodity, because it is the labor that produces the first unit and the rest costs nothing, it is a tiny amount of labor. And here, what one has to take into account is that it is not a question of the production of a unit, but of a mass of use values. It's not that producing the original program costs all the work, design, etc. and the copy costs only to record it or transmit it over the internet. That mass of work that it took to develop the program will be carried in the corresponding proportion, in each of the units that later, the only thing that is needed is to transmit the data. A proportional portion of that original work is going to appear in this entire product. It would be the same as saying now – I don't know if cars are still produced with dies, but it changed strongly – that if they make the die to make the body of a car, and if it was used for a car, only that car carries all the value of the matrix. But no, the matrix is made to make a whole series of units, and the same goes for the software production process.

What also changes in technical development is that when the increase in the productivity of labor was carried in the body of the machinery, making the second machinery took a very large amount of work. I say: what the work of developing the machinery had cost is a small portion of what it costs to produce each unit of

[198] Fridge, fridge.

the machinery, so the original development work of the machinery is transferred a small bit. In software development there is an abyss of difference between what that unit apparently costs and what can then be reproduced. And there are third parties who can appropriate that product and "reproduce" it... let's put it like this [laughs]...

I don't dare, because some societies are more serious than Argentina's, but here we are all pirates. So, the appropriation of the product can be done with very low... Appropriation by someone who is not the private owner of the machine, as before (in this case of the software), can be done with very little expense. And then it becomes a critical question (which has been going on historically since before) that the recovery by the capital that made the development of the software, that it recovers what it spent on its development, takes the form of the prohibition of the reproduction of the software: patents. There is a strong development of patents because the product entails a very large development expense and then it is appropriable by third parties, not the capital that developed it, at a very low cost. It is linked to the strong development of intellectual property, as a way in which private property is affirmed in the process of "recovery" of the capital applied in development and after the appropriation of the surplus value that corresponds to that capital appropriated in development. So, this process of what appears as a private property over a certain commodity (I am not going to say "means of production" because it can also be a means of life) appears, which can be reproduced at no cost by subjects other than the one who made the development.

[Edgardo asks that he repeat the patents because it was not clear to him].

Let's put it like this, very extreme. It is an expression of private property over products that enclose a production process that can later be produced by a private subject other than the one that made the original development. It was always present that the one who made the original development, which is the source of extraordinary surplus value, has private property over that development. But to the extent that doing what is called "reverse engineering" here, which is disassembling the machine from the original development to make the mold and assemble a machine that is the same as that, and the one who manages to do that has saved himself the original technical development work, he only needs the work of reverse engineering. He then privately appropriated the product of another's labor without giving in return the value of that product, which includes the labor necessary to have developed the technique embodied in this machine.

When making the copy involves a substantial capital expenditure anyway, the patent is there because private property is imposed, but the issue has some scope. It contrasts with software development in that the product that sprang from that original and appropriated work can be taken by another that did not do the original development, has a very low cost and is easily appropriated. And then, the issue that in the first case played a role but was "secondary" compared to what it cost to re-produce the machine that had the technical innovation without paying the cost of producing the innovation, now that has been turned around, it is appropriable practically for free.

The formal question, then, of guaranteeing to the private owner of development that he is going to appropriate the full value of that product, and of the capitalist mode of production, that he is going to appropriate all the surplus value he can on that basis, takes the form of a juridical relation even more strongly. It used to have it, but there was a material barrier to the gratuitous appropriation of that labor from one capitalist by another; Now it appears the other way around: the only barrier can be one of a legal nature. [...] This appears, which is proper to the capitalist mode of production and is also a condition for technical development in the capitalist mode of production. When they propose that patents should disappear... that would imply the overcoming of private property and the capitalist mode of production. The necessary form taken in the capitalist mode of production by the production of certain use-values is then dissociated from what is the capitalist mode of production. It is not a question of reforming it, the only possibility is to overcome it, that is what is at stake in this movement.

[...] There are reasons for there to be capital that renounces its patent, but that also makes the form of the technical conditions. Why did Microsoft first turn a blind eye to the piracy of its Operating System? Because its universalization becomes a condition for that product to be a use value, and the concrete way for it to be universalized under the presence of private property is to immediately turn private property into a fiction: you can't use it, but if you use it, nothing happens. And then the same thing happens openly with products that are free to use, but that the condition for them to be able to function as what they are, and for that capital to be able to sell other types of commodities or have another source of what it sells, is that it be universal. And then, free use comes, and the one who wins in free use ends up displacing the others in the competition.

Regarding intellectual property, a question arises... And I take advantage of the fact that they are from different national spheres, and I am going to refer to something that does not exist in Argentina, but apparently to publish in North American publishers – I don't know if in all the European ones or not – there is now the proposal that one cites a published work, with quotation marks, different margins, etc. the page where the work is, and permission must be sought from the private owner of the intellectual right. Which for me is surprising, because we all quote here... As a way of saying "it's not me who says this", it seems to me a matter of intellectual honesty that if I'm criticizing what so-and-so says, to say that this is where so-and-so says it, it's not that I'm attributing something to him. And now it appears as if it were appropriating a product that is supposed to be the meaning of the intellectual work that is going to materialize in a book, is that the book is disseminated. But it caught my attention. There was a case of someone who quoted me and wrote me an *email* asking if I authorized to meet me. What is objectionable is that someone takes someone else's published text and reproduces it as if it were not a quotation.

Edgardo: I don't know what it will be like there, but here at the CONACyT of the UNAM, it is necessary to be cited, it gives you points to level up; let's say that the more cited you are, the better you can sell your workforce in the world of academia. So asking permission would go against you.

Alejandro: A quantitative expression of your quality as an academic.

JIC: I know it indirectly, here in Argentina what is requested are publications, I think that citations have not yet arrived but I know from people who have told me about Spain... And now of Mexico.

Edgardo: At UNAM there is a platform that tells you how many people have summoned you.

JIC: What the rule does say is that when reproducing more than 800 words of a text or I don't know what percentage of the original text...

[Responding to Alejandro about what happens if the author is dead.]

You have to ask permission from whoever has the intellectual property, because the publisher or the author's heirs can have it (I have quoted Rubin a lot of...). But well, it begins to become a kind of caricature of the meaning of what appears as private property, but taken to a point where... It seems to contradict that this is public but it seems that it is not for public use.

[Responding to Alejandro (Chat) on what role free software plays in the development of the productive forces]

"Free software" is often presented as if it were the negation of the capitalist mode of production, as something outside of it or even its supersession. And then you look at who is the main user of free software, and it's all the capitals that use Linux. And it turns out that they have the product of a series of sellers of labor power who did not receive in return the value of their labor power and that it is available for use by the largest servers that exist. The question is what role does it play in the production of that labor power that free software produces, what role does it play to see themselves as fully free individuals, freed from capital, which makes them produce a certain use value for free for capital. The one who made the program this... It must be Linux, but there's another... That it is the program used by all servers, which are part of the constant capital of different individual capitals... Why does this need arise?

In my opinion, it refers to the conditions of reproduction of a given labor force, which we will look at later. Because up to this point the labor power that appears in the text is a labor force that we saw reduced to an appendage of machinery or tied to the partial work of manufacturing... We did see that capital needs to have a certain development of universal productive attributes, but that's as far as we saw it. So, when you are confronted with free software, what does it look like, what does it have as content... It gives you a lot to stop and discuss it.

Alejandro: In the fact that we have these Linux distributions for servers... I understand that yes, it's the fact of having the OS for free, but then the support offered to you doesn't... There is another issue.

JIC: Think that the support is either provided by capital that makes use of free software, or when it is lent by the producers of free software themselves, it ends up serving the capital that makes use of it. So the question is why does a production need to take that shape... And again what we have is that in the capitalist mode of production all concrete forms are concrete forms of capital. What role does that play? That it is not in the abstract that software was produced "behind the back" of capital, but software that uses capital and that was free because it did not have to pay for the labor force that produced it.

If we are with this, we go back to the question of when it is said that it is what it costs to "reproduce" the commodity, and that the proposal appears, for example, that when an invention is made, the invention can no longer be reproduced because it is already made, and the same with the development of original software, Originality cannot be reproduced. And this appears as a criticism that socially necessary abstract labor no longer governs social production. And here what is at stake is that "reproducing" does not refer to reproducing that thing that as an invention had only one possibility of being created, but to producing a certain use value so that it is in a condition to be put to work in production today. The production of the invention requires a quantity of socially necessary abstract labor that determines the value of that invention when it takes the form of commodities. So, afterwards it makes no sense to be talking about the work to be reproduced is no longer valid because it is not reproducible. It is a commodity that has a certain material character, which is to be an original intellectual product, and then if it is going to take the form of a commodity, the value will be determined by what it cost to produce it. It is to use the term "reproduce" to empty the value determination of content.

This work can be seen most clearly in agricultural production. The productivity of labor in agricultural production in general is subject to natural conditions that are not controllable by capital. They may be technically so, but this control may imply that the value of the product far exceeds the value of the product produced subject to natural conditioning. In particular, seasonal conditioning appears.

When one looks at the price of agricultural commodities of seasonal production, one finds that they have a value (I am going to take it as if it were the price) at the time of harvest, but throughout the year, especially those that have an annual cycle, they become more expensive. And when the harvest is about to come out, it can happen that it becomes very expensive or very cheap. So, in neoclassical economics, this is attributed to a problem of supply and demand: when the harvest comes out there is a lot of supply and then it falls because the stored product is exhausted, and at the end of the year it is exhausted. And in reality what one has to look at is that supply and demand play in the annual product, not in the immediacy of the moment of production. What happens is that this commodity, in order to store it, it takes a lot of work to store, there is a loss of a part of the use value and then the mass of work materialized in a mass of product, due to the deterioration becomes smaller, and then each unit of that mass of product contains a greater amount of work. That is the basic determination, there is one more that we will see in Volume 3.

What does it mean to "reproduce" that commodity? If you take wheat, there is a time of year where it is basically sown in winter and harvested in early summer. Wheat today can be produced at any time, only that wheat sown in a greenhouse with temperature and radiation equivalent to that of the sun, etc., has an enormously higher value than that which has been dragging the wheat harvested at the time when the productivity of labor is naturally higher. So, the value of wheat is not determined by what it costs to reproduce it because at that moment no one can reproduce it (except for those who want to do it at a value that is above this).

When the time for the next wheat harvest approaches and you begin to see that due to the natural conditions, the harvest that follows, as the productivity of labor is going to be very high because the natural conditions are very good – let's take it to the extreme – or the other way around because they are very bad, and consequently the value is going to fall sharply or rise strongly (but that wheat is not yet there), To the extent that consumption can be brought forward or postponed, it will happen that if the next harvest is going to have a higher value, it will try to bring forward consumption and to the extent that it is brought forward now there will be a pressure of demand on supply that will cause that, not the value of that wheat, but the commercial price of that wheat, rises. And vice versa, if you expect very high productivity and the value is going to be very low, you seek to delay consumption, so that immediate demand drops and the price falls below the value until the new harvest comes out and the value determined by what it now cost to produce it is imposed. But throughout the year it is not what it costs to reproduce that wheat, but what it cost to produce it.

So, what you have in front of you is this: it is a *reproduction* in conditions that can already be put into production. If "reproduction" means that in 6 months there will be the new machine that will have that highest productivity of labor, and today what the machine costs is what the old machine cost, what will happen is that no one will want to buy the old one knowing that the new one is coming, then production is going to be strangled and the old one is going to drop in price. But until the new one arrived on the market, it is a price that is below value, it is not a fall in the value of the machine.

[Aristides asks when the production of brands that allow copies to be made, such as Nike or Adidas] takes place]

JIC: We would have to look at the specific case, because there is something else that may also have to do with universality. There they let it be, but at the same time every now and then they send a police raid and take everything that has "symbols".

Aristides: It's like the seizure of drugs, which they do from time to time to make a count.

JIC: Yes, regulate how much of that there is. This is purely speculative, but associating it with software, I could think that for these brands universality also plays a role in terms of valuing that capital in the movement of competition. I suppose there are brands like in La Salada (for non-Argentines, it is a kind of fair

selling a lot of unbranded clothes, but counterfeit ones also appear, which works at night, in the early hours of the morning and in the open air)... There is the double thing of being seen as an exclusive thing for the use of a certain part of society, for some it must work... I don't know if the fact that it is a widespread use does not play a role there. After all, the individual walks down the street with the three stripes [of Adidas or its counterfeits] and that has some effect on the conscience that makes it desirable to have the coso with the three stripes, and then some will buy the counterfeit and others the original, but it also gives a presence to the brand, I don't know if that will work or not. But if it is not part of constituting that garment that has the strips in a different use value than the other use values.

Aristides: In addition, it is never in doubt which is the tricky product and which is not: the one you buy at Adidas or Nike, it is more evident that it is not like what happens with other products that you do not know, it is more evident. I was also surprised that in any small town you go to you always have textile shops, which are usually from communities of [...][199] or Peruvians who go shopping in La Salada once a month or sometimes more regularly, and already have the transport combinations to go shopping, how everything is so regularized anywhere in Argentina. [...]

JIC: It can also play a role in the fact that for brands, the one who buys that is not an audience of the brand, is not a buyer of the brand because he can't because of the price difference. And then combine that you're doing propaganda, because you're showing that it matters to have that brand, that it plays a role in personal representation to be using it, and I don't really know if they lose any sales... Because what Alejandro said before, that the customer of the brand's business is not a customer of La Salada and the one of La Salada is not a customer of the brand's business... So, I don't know how much the counterfeiting will hump the brands, but a specific study would have to be done. Because I suppose that what are more "select" brands, in La Salada I don't think there is counterfeiting of those brands because it does not represent for buyers in general what a Nike, one of these, can represent. More than that I could not say.

Aristides: I wanted to raise with the issue of authorship, which was also raised to enter the game of legislation, of how technology is advancing, especially in terms of software and computing, and that generates a difficult question to see. And with music (because I come from that environment) I have doubts about the record issue. At one time the sound recording was on vinyl, etc., and even the CD was not so difficult to measure, to visualize, but when it is shared on a pen drive or virtually much faster, it is difficult for me to see that issue, how the value is prorated. Even with the existence of YouTube, a group, an artist makes a recording and uploads it... There is a quantification that YouTube does with the "likes", etc., but it is very difficult for me to measure it.

JIC: The first thing at stake is whether what is put on YouTube is a commodity or not. And in principle – I don't know how it works – is that if one puts open access, one's work is not taking on the character of a private labor in which the social

[199] What he says is not well understood.

relationship is going to take the form of a buying and selling of commodities. One put a use value that, since it was produced privately, we have to see if it is a social use value or not. But it is making it available to anyone who wants to recognize it as a use value without giving anything in return, which has as a condition that one is alive, and to be alive somewhere one has to be selling commodities. But it appears with this determination. When it is copyrighted and you have to pay for the use, then the subject who produced that produced it produced it as a commodity and what he expects – let's put it in very simple terms – is to receive the value of that commodity. And every time that happens[200], and in fact in all transmissions that are not from the internet (TV, radio), every time a music is played, a copyright is paid for its use. So, it is not entirely clear to me what you saw as problematic.

Aristides: I think it was the case that you put that it seems that it is like if you don't expect some reproductions it is because you are reproducing your life in a different way or somewhere else you are selling. This is what you said about the No. 1 brand of Nike or Adidas, which let that trout garment be reproduced to obtain universality.

JIC: I guess there are subjects and subjects who upload music to YouTube. There is an example that I was going to give before but it has nothing to do with art, but I suppose that also being able to sell the original commodity-music, whether by composition or original interpretation, has a certain universality as a condition. And that allowing it to be pirated makes universality, that later more individuals appear who, since everyone recognizes that production as a social use value, are willing to pay the value of the commodity. With the example I remembered the case of Monsanto with glyphosate, where it developed the soybean seed resistant to glyphosate, but did not patent it because its objective was to sell glyphosate. When the use of seed became widespread, then it was patented, and in the case of Argentina I don't know now, but years ago the Argentine state's proposal was that the deadlines for patenting were expired and it could not be registered. There was all the fight and I think that now Monsanto managed to charge something in return, but it is this situation: first a product is given away, and when it became a necessity, now it is charged.

You would have to look at each case, and I suppose there must be quite a few studies on that, quite biased by the idea that this is "free" software, "social solidarity", etc. outside the capitalist mode of production, but there are quite a few things of that. There is an Argentine sociologist who worked on this issue but I am not going to remember his name; he was a student of mine and we discussed this issue of free software and so on... It is all a question of what kind of social relationship and what is truly at stake.

They are transformations that have all the character of any social process in the capitalist mode of production, which may be expressing a development of the human productive forces that exceed the scope of the capitalist mode of production *in the form* of the capitalist mode of production, so that they do not

[200] It is issued.

exceed the scope of the capitalist mode of production. When one looks at the development of education, it has a development that is of the human being, which so to speak "transcends" the capitalist form of that development, but at the same time it has the capitalist form, which is the negation of the development of knowledge, of human freedom. The development of education is the form that the development of alienation in capital takes. What happens in the capitalist mode of production always has this double character: insofar as it is the bearer of the development of the productive forces, it shows that it aims to transcend the capitalist mode of production, but at the same time it does so in the form of the capitalist mode of production, and it reproduces it as the negation of this development.

This appears permanently. It is this: the development of machinery is the potentiality to free the human being from the labor process as a simply animal process, which is to use the hands. What is human about it is that it is consciously regulated, but when you look at it, it does the same as the animal that grabs a primitive instrument and uses it (the monkey sucking the stick and putting it in the anthill so that the ants stick together). With the development of machinery, human work becomes the development of the ability to control natural forces, so that they operate automatically without the intervention of human hands and transform the environment into a means for human life. Marx puts it: the development of machinery is the possibility of freeing the human being from all the conditions of ... Shorten the working day, reduce the immediate work of the human being because now it makes nature act as if it were its own arm. And what does it do in the capitalist form? Extend the working day. It incorporates into the labor process human beings who have not yet developed the fullness of their capacities to work and destroys them prematurely. This is permanent: the development of the productive forces, which pushes to transform the materiality of work, at the same time does so at the expense of the individual who works.

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c) *Intensification of work.*

What follows is that here there is an association between two movements. On the one hand, the use of machinery enhances the productive capacity of labor and the rate of surplus value, and therefore, capital has a part of itself that is applied to produce more and more surplus value, and has the other part, the constant capital put into machinery as an inert capital to produce surplus value but which also loses its value if it is not brought into contact with human labor. The first thing that will appear is something that we have already seen with child and female labor: capital launches itself to prolong the working day as much as possible, whoever personifies capital is going to put into operation as much work as possible, and tries to eliminate any resistance that the workers may present to it.

Marx is going to continue with the development and a question is going to appear that has given rise to a whole series of discussions because of the way Marx presents it. When we saw when a capitalist has a technical innovation, having a productivity of labor above normal allows him to obtain an extraordinary surplus

value. […] And here Marx is going to use an expression to explain what this work does that is going to be represented as more value because social value is above individual value: he is going to express it by saying that now the work that the capitalist can dispose of that has innovation when it has not yet been generalized, It appears as enhanced labour which multiplies the social value of the product over and above the individual value, and then the capitalist finds himself having to apply to the payment of labour power a proportionately smaller part of the total product of labour, and then tries to extend the working day. And here it is discussed that this work that appears to be enhanced produces more value [...].

Marx goes on to say that it has the same effect as if there were a prolongation of the working day, of the total product: since they are recognizing a value that is above the individual, the capitalist has to use a smaller part of that product to pay the value of the labor power, and this would be equivalent to an extension of the day where more value would have been produced; and relatively a smaller part of the day would be necessary to pay the value of the labor power used, which would imply paying it below the value, so that it will be difficult to reproduce it under normal conditions. But it is not that this labour now produces more value, but that now in the same quantity of labour as before, it is represented socially in an extraordinary way as if it had been more intense and had produced more value.

What Marx is going to ask next is what happens when the machine that was a source of extraordinary surplus value becomes generalized, and social value becomes determined by this new individual value. Consequently, it is clear that surplus value does not spring from the labour power which the capitalist saves through machinery, but from the expenditure of labour power which is applied to the operation of the machine. So it is not that there has been a time when labor produced more value and now produces less: when it seemed to produce more value, that more value corresponded to the appropriation of that extraordinary surplus value, and it implies that the product of a greater quantity of social labor than this branch is contributing has to flow into a certain branch of production. Was all this understood? That resembles the effect of the prolongation of the working day, but it is not, and at the same time it is not that this work by itself is capable of producing more surplus value, but that socially there is a part of surplus value that comes from elsewhere and is appropriated by the capitalist who makes the technical innovation by selling below the social value and above the individual value.

Javiera: But it still goes on, right?

JIC: What Marx proposes in this is: leaving aside the prolongation of the working day, the incorporation of the machine that allows extraordinary productivity, appears in the same way that an extension of the working day would appear. Because it takes the total product and by selling it above the individual value appropriates a larger mass of total value, as if there were more labour applied to the production of this commodity, although there is none. The value of labor power did not change but the total value is greater, so it seems that the surplus value arises from the fact that the working day was lengthened by saving labor. And when this extraordinary surplus value disappears and individual value equals

social value, it becomes clear that surplus value springs from the labour which is applied in production, not from labour which would have been saved in production.

Javiera: In this process, more use values are produced, and the value of these use values is reduced, right?

JIC: When you go to the normal situation, the individual value decreases, and in the movement what one can say is that the price is falling. I always argued that one has to distinguish normality as such and movement from normality.

In normality, there is a situation that is given in which there are some who have a higher productivity than the average and others who have a lower one. Why is the average what determines *value in the simplest way*? For that corresponds, if one takes the weighted average of the quantity of labour and multiplies it by the units produced, the total sum of labour which was privately and independently applied (suppose that all was recognized as socially necessary) to production is equal to the quantity of abstract socially necessary labour to which the producers of these commodities are entitled.

Some spent 12 hours and others 8 hours, but on the average they spent 10 hours, and let us suppose that there are ten producers and they made available to society the product of 100 hours of labor on average, and they have the right to dispose of 100 hours of abstract labor of the rest. When all commodities are exchanged for their value—the simplest expression of unity—then, as a whole, the producers of each commodity dispose of the product of the labor of others corresponding to the mass of labor which they applied. But inside each branch it can happen that one spent 12 hours and the other 8 hours. And the one who spent 12 hours will not receive the product of 12 hours of work, but that of 10 hours, and the one who spent 8 hours the same. The work of the one who spent 8 hours instead of 10 hours is not the source of that additional $2 (never in hours, it is in value) that he will receive. The source is that there is another one who spent 12 hours. So, it is not an isolated merit of the one who used a higher productivity of labor: he used it thanks to the fact that others used a lower one. If others had used the same productivity, he would not have received anything extra.

One has to distinguish this from the movement of normality. Normality is always in motion because in the capitalist mode of production it revolutionizes the conditions of production all the time. But when one wants to explain the determinations, one wants to recognize them, one has to separate normality as such from movement. And so, in the movement is where... One is not going to say: this one put 6 and then the average went instead of 10 to 9.90, and 9.90 is the new value and now we are in normality. No. What we have is... Normality presupposes that the size of the solvent social need corresponds to the size of the social production. And here the problem is that it is not the correspondence that is located... The price is not determined by this correspondence of normality, it is determined by a normal correspondence: there is a surplus of commodities and the solvent social need has to grow, and for that the price has to fall. Now, the price can go down much more or much less than 9'90. It depends on how that normality moves, because everything is out of normal, everything is in motion.

So, in order for it to be able to sell at $9.90 (the $6 and the others), it may happen that what those who produced at $12 and 10 lose – who are now losing $0.10 more per unit – or it may happen that the solvent social need grows more than proportionally and then value has to come from abroad to curb the price at $9.90. to make those commodities that have been added to production. It may be that a part of the value that was previously used to buy this commodity is freed up and that it goes elsewhere... So, we are not in normality, we are in the movement. In Volume 3 Marx states that the norm must be explained in order to explain deviations. It is a rule that needs to be realized in the form of a permanent detour, so one has to separate these two moments from normality and its movement.

So, the use given to this "potentiated labor": 1) inverts the determination of the production of value, because the value that is going to be appropriated does not depend on each one, but on the set of producers of the same commodity; and 2) it is not that their work is enhanced and produces more value, but that their product is recognized as having more value because others are less recognized.

In relation to a given magnitude of capital (regardless of its growth), what will appear is that the two determinations, or factors (because it is an external relation between proportions) of the valorization of capital that intervene in determining how much surplus value a capital is going to produce, undergo an opposing movement. For with the incorporation of machinery the rate of surplus-value rises, but with a capital of a given magnitude the variable capital decreases, and consequently the number of labourers. Then there appears this contradiction between the development of the production of relative surplus value and therefore the valorization of capital, and consequently the socialization of private labor, that now not only is the constant capital put into raw materials faster and faster than the growth of variable capital, but the constant capital that machinery costs grows at the expense of variable capital. If total capital grows, it would be necessary to see what happens in the total magnitude between constant capital and variable capital. But if the total capital is given, it is clear that in order for the constant capital put into machinery to grow, the variable capital put into living labour must decrease. And the only possibility for this is that the number of workers decreases.

So, what is going to appear is that just as the development of machinery pushes capital to prolong the working day without limit... He is even going to argue that the workers cannot face this expression of capital to prolong the working day. At the same time, the extension of the working day plus the reduction of workers displaced by machinery, what it does is generate "[...] a *surplus working population*, which has no choice but to submit to the law imposed by capital".[201] Then, it appears for the first time that a character development... By simply looking at the relationship in these determinations without stopping at the concrete movement of what happens if capital grows and what happens to its growth, the generation of this surplus working population *for the needs of capital will appear.*

[201] Marx, K. (1977: 335), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

When we follow the movement of this unlimited extension of the working day, what will appear is the contradiction that we saw between the total capital of society and the needs of individual capital, which is the exhaustion of labor power. And so this form of autonomous regulation of the movement of the conditions of purchase and sale of labor power needs to take the form of a direct regulation: a law that limits the length of the working day, that defines what a normal working day is. I make a clarification: Marx is going to use the term "a *reaction* of society". In general, in what we are going to see later, it also appears like this. There is no reference to it being a necessity of the total capital of the company. Marx goes on to say that society is "threatened in its vital nerve".[202] In my opinion, one needs to make explicit that the determination that underlies this, the concrete form that this need takes, does not spring abstractly from the reproduction of human life, but arises as a necessity from the unity of the movement of the total capital of society, and that is why it is the political representative of that total capital of society who has the power to impose direct regulation over the indirect regulation.

[Aristides refers to the fact that in previous chapters he raises this together with a historical development.]

JIC: Let's see if I understood the axis of what you are proposing. In my opinion, the determinations that we are seeing can be deployed even if one does not see them in a concrete historical process. Because it is, so to speak, in the *essence* of capital, when it appears to take on content in concrete forms, when the power of machinery to increase the productivity of labor and consequently to generate the appropriation of extraordinary surplus value — in this specific case — one would say: well, if capital encounters a source of increased productivity of labor that loses value if it is not used, with the opposite movement that the source loses value but is also not capable of producing value, but it is a condition for the rate of surplus value to increase... All this development says: well, what the consciousness that personifies capital has to do is to prolong the working day. And what happens if the working day is extended and it is considered that workers are also being expelled from the production process? A surplus working population is formed.

And this is what follows: what happens when this surplus working population is generated? That labor power begins to be sold below value due to competition among workers. This is to the benefit of individual capital, but from the point of view of the unity of this movement, this undermines the basis of this unity. And consequently this unity, which is the subject of this process, must manifest its necessity by imposing itself on the movement of its individual organs by limiting the working day. One could look at it like that and one can make the same development without looking at historical forms.

Now: when one accompanies this development with historical forms, it is clear that much more flows in the exhibition... as a development that he makes on more concrete forms, than simply the spinning of a reproduction of the movement but that does not refer to the concrete manifestations that it is having. Why does Marx do it this way? When we look at the chapter on the working day and all the very

[202] Both expressions appear in the first paragraph of the section.

careful development of the process of determining the working day where references appear such as in passing, that the working class "wrests this from capital", that the state "makes this concession"... In my opinion, that exhibition is not the best. The best is to say: there is *this*, *this* and *this* determination that takes *this* form: that of the political, trade union action of the working class, which confronts the action of the capitalist class that takes this other form, etc. And then one can, from that movement, arrive at the concrete form that is the state. By making historical development by itself, the state appears as if it were a determination external to the movement of capital, which also has the power to limit the movement of capital.

And besides, the word "concession" appeared (I don't remember if in this chapter or in the one on the working day), and in my opinion there is no concession, but the concrete form that a certain determination is going to take at a certain moment. If one looks at the immediate form, it seems that this is "torn away" from the state, but the state is the form that this movement takes. When the processes of concentration and centralization of capital – phenomena that have not yet existed – take on a degree of substantive development, it is not that competition disappears and the state begins to regulate the relationship between these capitals in defense of competition: what happens is that management by the state is a historical form that competition takes. So, invoking the presence of the state without developing that the state is a form of capital, it is capital in its movement, feeds the representations that the state is external to capital, etc.

I make one more observation with this. We find ourselves with the state essentially when machinery appears. Because when we looked at the other two forms, cooperation, which is a phenomenon that occurs within individual capital, did not change the general movement... so to speak, outside of capital there was nothing new, simply the products of labor began to appear as the product of social labor done within private labor. When we look at the division of labor in manufacturing, there were not many questions that transcended the movement of individual capital either. And if I remember correctly, in fact nothing appears in the exhibition. But here, what appeared is a revolutionary form of the concrete movement of social production.

And it begins to happen, in something that one could take abstractly as *a biological determination* (it is not simply that), and even if one did not know how the life of society is organized, one can say: while the physical strength and natural life of individuals is lacking, it was very limited by the conditions of life themselves but also by the condition that appears to sprout beyond these immediate social conditions... There was necessarily going to be more male work than female work. But now there is a change in technical conditions that makes it tend to be indifferent, moving towards the indifferentiation between female and male work. But since before the sellers of labor power were essentially the men of the working class, and there is a whole process in which they were not recognized as free subjects for political relations, but for private legal relations, then the form that this transformation has to take includes the unity of the movement of the total capital of society. It cannot be limited to movements within individual capital, and

therefore necessarily encompasses the State as the bearer of the development of that need.

And here, when we look at the extension of the working day and the contradiction that it generates surplus working population, then fewer workers are needed. Then, in return, it is the general unity of motion that appears "affected" and immediately the action of the state needs to appear, giving to this indirect relation the form of a direct relation. It is as if one were to say: the total capital of society is too altered for it not to express itself. And it expresses itself not abstractly by itself, but by springing from the class struggle. We have to consider that all these laws that we are going to see here come from the English parliament, where there is not a single representative of the working class. It is the struggle of the working class for the limitation of the working day that has the force it has because it is expressing a need for the total capital of society, but it has no more strength than to limit it to a certain extent (at first it was for the 12-hour day, then 10-hour...) because the need for the total capital of society does not go so far. The reason why he continues to go further later appears in a chapter that is later on. […]

[Pedro mentions that in Marxism the class struggle is usually put as the cause of the rise in wages, as if the capitalist made a concession, but if the wage goes down it is seen as a defeat for the working class. It is explained by an abstract force of one class over another, and capital as a subject is erased.]

JIC: Yes. Why does a class have strength at one time and not at another? That is precisely what one has to answer in order to be able to account for the forms that the movement of capital accumulation is taking in the class struggle. It's a particularly critical aspect because of the ease with which the abstraction is made, the emptiness that you're pointing out. […] And when one looks at the historical evolution of the capitalist mode of production, where it is quite clear that at a certain stage of development... If we talk first of the struggle for the reduction of the working day and the strength that the working class has because it expresses a need for the total capital of society, and hence the history of the shortening of the working day, and at a historical moment there appears a brutal reversal of what was the political force of the working class and the working day is getting longer, the working conditions are becoming precarious and there is no strength to make it a source... What changed in the materiality of the labor process so that the needs of the total capital of society have been turned around, and then, from giving strength to the working class, it now emptied that strength? A force that was expressed – without any apologetic intention what I am going to say – in the fact that the working class had mass political parties, and in general terms the working class no longer has them. It is an expression of weakness not being able to mobilize a mass of the population.

[Javiera mentions that in her translation she says that society sees "its vital roots" threatened]

JIC: With this "vital nerve" it seems that it is a problem of human life in the abstract. That this is "inhumane," and so we resist this movement because of its "inhumanity."

Javiera: But right after that he says about the "normal legally limited working day".

JIC: Yes, but because it says that society is threatened in its vital nerve, not because the total capital of society needs to limit the working day. That is my criticism of the way it is presented.

Javiera: But that's also right, is the...?

JIC: But that's not what governs the movement.

Javiera: But for me that is also at stake, not as an abstract parallel.

JIC: Yes, but whether it is at stake, that depends on what capital needs. If capital did not need that population and could annihilate it, the "vital nerve" would be at stake... and yet nothing would happen. So, attributing it to a problem that what is at stake is the "natural" life of society without mediating it because of the concrete form it has, what it does, in my opinion, is to feed the appearances that it is a human spirit that rises up against the violence of capital, and the state, which we do not know who it is. intervenes to resolve the issue. Of course, the life of society is at stake, but one cannot explain it by the abstract life of society, but by the concrete way in which the life of society is organized.

When one looks at it in the current historical situation, with a situation of growing misery, it is clear that the life of society is at stake. But I lacked something that is specific. Someone can come and tell me that the human being is a creature of God, and it cannot be that a creature is subjected to these torments: let us arise. That is a way that this awareness has of organizing its political action. If I say what I have in mind that human life is being attacked by the social form that this process has, then I am going to organize my action in a different way. And I'm going to answer myself if I have the strength to face this and how far my strength goes, and the answer is going to be that my strength doesn't spring from my abstract will. My will is the bearer of this determination and my form of action is this or that. In that sense, I don't... I submit the entire text to criticism, and on these points I have one thing to say: the very development that Marx is making does not lead me to look at it in this way, but in another way. And this is what I propose.

Javiera: [...] Without seeing unity it is difficult to distinguish, for example... Pedro said something that reminded me of this thing about militancy, that if one stays in the vital importance for capital of the reproduction of labor power, and one sees workers on strike, and that nothing happens after that strike, one could say: but how? If what is at stake is the struggle for the sanction of the sale of labor power for the normal, why is nothing happening? What would come, to ask who this labor force is, that it is also a surplus population and that is why this demand, that struggle does not translate into any effect where the value of its labor power is

adjusted? Are only the struggles of the workers that are not surplus going to be channeled...? There I get lost, at what point do I resume unity to explain that specificity?

JIC: [...] I return to something that Marx raises in the lecture that is published as "Wages, Price and Profit", discussing the proposal of an anarchist [Weston] who says that the workers fight for the increase in wages, they succeed and achieve it, but the capitalists increase prices and sterilize the increase. Therefore, the trade union struggle would not make sense, it is a mechanism by which nothing is achieved, and the only thing that would fit is the revolutionary struggle, the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. What Marx replies to him, in a development that he half-synthesizes, and which is prior to his developing the difference between labor power and labor, is, first, that what Weston says is nonsense. Rising prices have nothing to do with rising wages. He makes the development that corresponds to Chapter III of Volume 1 when he says that if there are signs of value in circulation and more are added, there will be a general movement of prices. And then he goes on and says that with his union struggle, all that the working class can aspire to achieve is that labor power is sold for its value, and that is why it can never leave the union struggle. So it is not that the union struggle can only be carried out by the working population, which is not surplus. In the first place, the part of the working class that is selling its labor power needs to establish the relationship of solidarity with the one that is not selling it, because if not, it will saturate the market and it will not be able to sell either one or the other for its value.

And secondly, there is a determination that I will generally raise later, but since it was raised here, I think it is necessary to put it now. We see that the capitalist mode of production continually revolutionizes the material conditions of labor, and therefore continually revolutionizes what a human being is in the concrete form of what is a worker and what is a capitalist. Where is this revolution heading? It is the expression of the development of the productive forces of social labour. And so far, the one who appears as the subject who carries that movement, whose consciousness and will carry that movement, is the capitalist. And later we will see what Marx says about the capitalist as a historical subject. And the workers appear simply as bearers of this movement. When we look at what happens with [...] the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery [...], which implies this expulsion of labor power from production, what appeared was that the more expensive the labor power was, the easier it is to incorporate machinery, to revolutionize the material conditions of P. The cheaper the workforce, the more difficult it is to incorporate machinery, because the limit that has to exceed the cost of machinery is much further away. So, you have to increase the productivity of labor at a lower cost than a paid living job that costs very little.

In this movement, the action of the working class in defence of labour power for its value – because this is the content of that struggle – has a progressive character, because the more expensive labour power is, the faster capital is forced to make these revolutions in the development of the productive forces. If this development of the productive forces can be the bearer of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, the action of the working class in defense of the conditions of sale of

its labor power pushes capital to accelerate the transformation of the materiality of labor. This development is carried out by the working class at its own expense: the more the machinery is developed, the more the possibilities are created for capital – in what we have so far – to extend the working day and multiply the surplus working population. But every action by any portion of the working class in defense of the conditions of sale of its labor power, of the conditions of reproduction of that labor power, pushes capital forward.

So, it's not that the union struggle... What is going to be differentiated is that in an autonomous regulation, the norm can only be imposed in the form of a deviation from the norm. The form of the detour is that the detour goes to one side and was passed, and then it has to return to normal. And if it went too far, the force that made it go too far is not going to bring it to normality: it is going to continue to take it beyond that detour. Then the other one appears... The movement of capital means that the forces that the capitalist had to push there went too far, and then now the force of the working class appears (put as if it were mechanically, externally), but if this had to go this far | * |, and it came this far | *|; Now it is the working class that is beginning to have strength, not to take it here |* |, but more here | * |[203], and then the capitalist class... And it is the permanent movement from which the unity of the movement of the life of society is imposed, which is the movement of total capital.

An example that I believe is extensible to all Latin American societies and that is clear in Argentina. […] We said that capital needs the future worker to go through a process of schooling and that is why it cannot exhaust his labor power prematurely, it needs him to have these more or less "universal" skills to whatever degree, and the prohibition of child labor appears. When you look at Argentine society, you say: but it's full of child labor. He even sees someone on television saying that Argentina's misery is due to the fact that they cannot hire children under 14 to work. That appears as if it were a discourse that benefits the life of society. Are we to assume that the one who fights against child labour will be able to eliminate child labour in these societies? He knows that he is defeated from the outset, but what role does it play that he opposes this? That instead of child labor go, move forward by sweeping away all adult workers... Because I have seen specific situations where the incorporation of machinery implied the replacement of all adult workers with minors.

So, you know that you are not going to win that fight; but if one has as a political objective to personify that struggle, what one has to do is confront that, because if not the sweep will be absolute. And the strength it has is limited, but it is personifying that capital cannot advance by sweeping away all adult workers and replacing them with minors. That is what gives it strength, but it is necessary to confront child labour. And the more one has in front of one that lacks the strength to "succeed", to achieve the full goal, that indicates that it is more necessary for someone to personify that action. Because in a society where there is no child labor (at some historical moments, some societies pointed to that more or less), it is easy to fight, because there is none. The problem, the need to fight against child labour,

[203] I hope you understand, movement simply represents a point between two limits.

is in those national spheres where child labour plays a central role in the accumulation of capital.

We always need the union struggle. Then one can ask oneself if one has the attributes to fully embody it, or more limitedly, if one has a need to embody it immediately or not... but always. And furthermore, to the extent that there is a need for the unity of this movement, the individuals who are the bearers of the need to confront what appears to be the simple need (which has no counterpart, shall we say) will appear, and the individuals willing to be the embodiment of the counterpart will appear, because they express a movement of that unity.

Iván: I have two questions to ask you related to this. In reference to this proposal that the class struggle and the trade union action of the working class seek to sell its labor power at its value, because the pressure exerted by the surplus working population tends to make it constantly sell below its value, I wanted to ask you if you also see the possibility that it will be sold in some cases above its value, for example in the cases of programmers, technicians... And on the other hand, we are always talking about the trade union action of the working class, and I wanted to ask how you understand the role of the political party of the working class.

JIC: When we talk about the class struggle, the universal worker and the universal capitalist, we are talking about the political organization of the working class.

Iván: You say that at present there is no political party of the working class, and I understand that I could also see that as: well, there is no political power of the working class in order to overcome the capitalist mode of production at this time. But then, at other times, the political party of the working class expressed a need for capital, for example in its centralization in the case of the USSR... What is the role of the political party of the working class? The union action is to sell its labor power for its value and to guarantee the unity of the MoP, so that the living conditions of the class that is generating that value are not degraded. But what is the need for the political party?

JIC: I'm going to leave it partly because you refer to things that in *Capital*... The USSR is nowhere to be found. When the time comes, we can ask ourselves if and how we look at it. I go for the first question.

All commodities – when one looks at it with determinations that do not appear so far – are sold in movements that are sometimes above or below value. Cyclical movements appear that arise from the private nature of work essentially, which make value not only impose itself as an average because suddenly there is too much or suddenly too little, but there is a cyclical movement that determines that *necessarily*, and not circumstantially, there is a surplus or lack. The first thing in front of one is that the sale of labor power for its value implies that there are times when something above or below value is sold.

Assuming that it is sold for its value, so far we have only indications that it could be systematically sold below value. Now, in addition to these movements, it is a commodity which, from the point of view of the materiality of the labour-process, has different VUs: there is not yet an absolutely universal worker. Then it may happen circumstantially that a certain type of worker in particular is lacking, as may be the case with programmers, and then there is a problem that the solvent social need is higher than the supply of that commodity for its value, and that labor power is sold above its value until there is an overabundance of programmers to their misfortune and the general movement returns.

When we advance further, we are going to face how the value of labor power is determined. So far we take it as something that was given when we started. In chapter IV it appeared that we are going to take the conditions that come from what was implicitly a producer of commodities, it was the physiological minimum plus a historical and moral part that depended on what he was used to, but the determination of that value did not appear. And this was one of the reasons why we said that at a certain point we knew capital as a subject, but that it is not yet capable of setting its own conditions. It does not yet say that capital is the one that determines what the value of labor power is, which means that it determines what use-values the worker has to consume. Regarding the first part, it is this.

With respect to the political organization of the working class, we have already talked about the state, about the class struggle, we put them above the line that said that these are the political relations. It is an action of a political nature where the border between what is union action and politics is not a border... I had proposed something that one of the members of the CICP who at one time participated in the workshop, which is Fernando[204], develops, where he stopped to look at the employment contract. At least in Argentina... Contracts are all of private legal relations, the labor contract is of public legal relations, and therefore of political relations. We are going to see it move to private legal relations very quickly as things look, but... We will see if the trade union organization of the working class transcends the sphere of private legal relations, enters politics and has sufficient strength to avoid this transformation. Now: we still do not look at whether the working class is a revolutionary subject or not.

Up to this point, those who direct the development of the productive forces of social labor (which Marx says "appropriates the science of others", without it being apparent who is the subject of the science of others) are the capitalists. And the working class appears simply linked to the reproduction of this way of organizing social production. What we have so far is that even in the simple defense of the conditions for the sale of labor power, capital is being forced to advance in the direction of the development of the productive forces of labor on this basis that we are looking at. Our starting question was what we do as political subjects. This is still the answer to that question. But up to this point one cannot answer much more.

[204] He is probably referring to Fernando Dachevsky.

With respect to the political parties of the working class, what I said was that they had mass parties, which recognized themselves as political parties of the working class. Today there are no mass parties that recognize themselves in this condition. At least in Argentina, where the organization in which the working class participated in its political organization was not recognized as a political party of the working class: it was recognized as multi-class. And it was a mass organization of the working class. In other countries I don't know enough to be able to say it, but it is clear that where they are still recognized as political parties of the working class, the socialist and communist parties, they are no longer mass parties in general. In Argentina they no longer exist, and the remains that remain, one is horrified to see whose political representatives they are. The Labour Party in England was opposed to Thatcher's policy, strongly linked to the trade union organization, and when the Labour Party returned to power in England it was the "New Labor", which had little left of what was a Labour party.

It's a description, a reference, I don't intend to make any foundation, but precisely: the problem is that one has to explain why that changed. One can stop at appearances and say: because the leaders of that party are a bunch of traitors, that is why the working class has been defeated and does not have a revolutionary consciousness, because there is not enough revolutionary consciousness... And he stops at the appearance of a consciousness without asking himself about its determinations. And we have already seen that the simplest and most general determination of consciousness in the capitalist mode of production is that it is a free consciousness because it is alienated in the commodity; and already looked at in its concrete development, because it is alienated in capital. [...][205].

When the limitation of the working day appears, we had seen the expression that Marx uses that "[...] capital demands equal rights of exploitation", the working day established by law will be generalized to all branches. But there is going to be another determination that is going to operate on the length of the working day that also springs from the machinery. And it is that machinery will multiply the intensity of work, which means that more labor power is spent in the same time. Thus, the very limitation of the working day causes capital to accelerate the development of machinery and consequently there is a machinery that imposes on the worker a more intense wear and tear of his labor power during that shorter day. And in turn, the fact that the intensity of work is being accentuated, imposes a shorter working day.

So, this new step will appear in the transformations in the materiality of work that entails that the worker has to have the productive attributes that are needed to do a more intense job, which in turn requires a shorter day. So the regulation of the working day that we saw sprout as a condition for the normal valorization of capital but limits its power to valorize itself because it shortens the working day, now we see that this movement engenders a power that has as a condition the shortening of the working day. Direct regulation that used to start simply by apparently limiting the power of capital to accumulate, and now that regulation is

[205] He says that he would like to continue, but that he is not going to answer any more so as not to divert us, and that these questions will reappear later.

a necessary concrete form that capital has to advance by revolutionizing the material conditions of production. That what seemed like an outer boundary is now a necessary form of that development.

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4. The factory.

The factory is the space in which, *in a private way*, the *direct organization* of social labor is present. It had appeared that it is an organization conscious of that work that has the form of a scientific organization. What is going to appear is that this scientific organization is going to be developed on the basis of a technical division of labor. Marx is going to look at the development of this technical organization from manual work to work with machinery.

His first observation is that, just as the tool became independent of the subjectivity of the worker, the structure of production no longer has the character it had in the manufacturing division of labor, but [...] changed the structure on this basis where before the workers were combined and now what is going to appear is a structure in which there is a main worker and a set of auxiliary workers. And at the same time he is going to propose the existence of another type of worker, those who correspond to the "control and maintenance of machinery" and in reference he is going to say: engineers, mechanics, carpenters... And I am going to make a clarification: the term "engineer", I actually suppose that the figure that appears is an *engineer*, which in English is the figure of a machinist. And he says that they are workers of a higher level and that they have partly a scientific training and partly have the status of artisans, of manual skill. And that they are separated from the other workers who appear to be attached to these factory workers. It is a differentiation within the collective worker of large-scale industry between these types of workers. There is no further development on that, it only says that it is a division of labor based on a technical issue.

We have these conditions of the workers, and now what is going to appear is the structure of the factory, and how in the material form that the labor process has, all the inversion proper to the social relation that is objectified is going to appear. That everything we were seeing of that social relationship is as if it took on a material body in the factory. The first thing that will appear is: while the tool is manual, the worker uses the tool. In the factory, on the other hand, the machine *makes use* of the worker. This determines what movements the worker has to make and at what speed this instrument of work is. In contrast to manufacturing where the structure of production is given by the group of workers, here there is a "dead mechanism" that imposes itself, to which the workers are added "as living appendages", [206]because the one that governs all movement is the machine.

The difference between the machine in the abstract and the capitalist use of machinery appears, where the machine is used to force the worker to work, and leaves that work empty of content, the worker no longer dominates the labor

[206] Marx, K. (1977: 349), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

process. The synthesis of this is that not only as a process of exploitation of the worker, of valorization, but also as a process of labor, it is not the worker who manages the conditions in which this process of labor takes place, but is subordinated to capital in the material form of machinery. And then, what appeared when we first looked at the process of production, in which in the process of labour the worker made use of the instruments of labour, and in the process of valorisation dead labour made use of living labour because it retained its value, has now acquired a material character. And then the fetishism we had of the commodity, later developed as the fetishism of capital, now appears in the material form of machinery as the concrete subject of the production process, and consequently of the process of social metabolism. This passes into the consciousness of the capitalist as the personification of capital. [...] What is raised here has the fullness of its ideological development in the proposals of neoclassical economics, of the theory of the production function, where the instruments of production are subjects that produce by themselves. [...][207].

Again, here comes science. The subjectivity of this worker, an appendage of machinery, becomes irrelevant in this process, what dominates is science, and the mastery over the natural forces that are put to work on the basis of this development of scientific knowledge, and the social character of the work of the mass of workers (not of the individual worker). All these powers confront the worker as powers of capital, personified in the capitalist, who is the one who is going to "objectify" the function, the power he has over the workers in the factory code, the regulation of the organization of the social character of labor. Marx is going to put it forward by saying that it is a caricature of the possibility of direct organization of the process of social labor. So, within the factory we have the conscious organization of a process of social labor where the objectification of the worker and the subjectivation of capital are fully inverted.

And something that had appeared in cooperation is going to reappear. Within the body of the collective worker, as this social labor must be structured and the organization, the discipline of this process must be imposed, the work of surveillance is developed, and what he will point out as the division of the workers within the collective worker between "manual" workers – although they are appendages of the machinery – and worker foremen; Private soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the army of industry. And it will appear that in this structure of organization, if the workers have any participation in the development of that organization, they do not do so as a power that is their own, but as personifying a power that is alien to them, which is of capital.

[Alexander asks what he says at the beginning that "the technical foundation on which the division of labor in manufacture rests is abolished."]

In the division of labor in manufacturing, the partial work that each worker is going to do, the possibility of dividing the manual labor that a worker did by two or more, was governed by the basis of the task that the human being could do with the tool, considering the jobs. Now it is born considering the machine, which is the

[207] He explains again the "income" corresponding to the "productivity" of each "factor". I skip it, since we have already seen it.

one that tells what jobs it needs. The division of labor still exists, but now it is the machine that specializes in partial tasks that divides it. With this caveat: there it is set out in the terms of the general determination.

It is clear that practically today inside the factory... A lathe worker was not the same 30-40 years ago as a welding worker. They are workers who are each specialized in a certain partial task. Now what governs that is the machinery system: there is a lathe worker and a milling worker because there is a machine that is the lathe and (today) there is a robot that is a welder. And to be a welder you have to have a different set of knowledge than the turner. It is clear that a lathe worker is an appendage of *his* machinery, he is not the same as a textile worker, even though a loom is a machine and even though capital needs a worker as universal as possible, there are still technical divisions of labor until now. But these divisions are given by the differentiation of machinery.

When the machinery has all the tasks integrated into itself, a possibility that appears with robotization and automated control, there begin to be workers who operate all the machines; it is a unique piece of machinery, but at the same time it is a worker who has the specific training that corresponds to that. Thus, the system of machinery does not eliminate the division of labor, but changes the basis on which it is established. And in what Marx proposes at the end of what we saw, he generates new forms of division of labor. Maintenance workers in pure manual work without machinery, have no function because you don't have to maintain anything, what there is is a worker specialized in sharpening tools but... Here it becomes a specialized task to serve the machine when it goes out of its normal motion or to prevent it from doing so. He is not a turner, he is a mechanical worker who knows how to fix lathes (sorry, because I have the explanation with lathes because at the time when I saw the concrete production processes immediately the lathe was the machinery par excellence).

The other thing I wanted to put was this: the development of machinery is annihilating the division of labor in manufacturing. But one must never forget in the historical development of a phenomenon that is later than the one Marx is writing about, where a very strong division of manual labor appears at the heart of the production of machinery: when the manual assembly line appears. The assembly of the previous machinery was manual but structured on the basis of an artisan, a worker with a group of auxiliary workers. The development of the manual assembly line explodes the production of machinery, and in the full system of the machinery, a manufacturing process emerges that plays a key role and that is only overcome when the assembly work becomes the skill that a machinery that is the robot has. There, machinery displaces manufacturing, but until that machinery is produced, manufacturing plays a substantial role at the heart of the machinery system.

5. Struggle between the worker and the machine.

We move on to the next section, which is the struggle between the worker and the machine, which arises from this inversion that we were looking at in which the

machine appears as the material incarnation of capital. Two moments appear: 1) a first moment in which the workers see in the machine a competitor that what it does is displace them from the production process, and then they attack the machinery as such; and 2) only later can they recognize that the problem is not the machinery, but that they are confronted with the capitalist use of machinery, and with the social form of the organization of the human life process, that the enemy is capital incarnated in the machinery. There is this confrontation, the machinery is displacing workers from the production process, there are beginning to be surplus workers... Yes, Javiera?

Javiera: I have a doubt in that part that you just mentioned, that it took time for the worker to learn to distinguish the use of machinery with its capitalist use. I kept thinking about what he means when he says that it took time and experience, because then he points out that he returns to manufacturing and I thought that there may be something there, but that does not appear, how he learns to make that distinction.

JIC: You are going to refer to what was called the "Luddite movement", which says that what must be done is to destroy the machinery so that the workers cannot be displaced. So, the problem is not to confront machinery in general, but capital, and that is what he is going to propose as a learning process for the workers. In fact, the Luddite movement disappeared and what remained was the trade union and political organization of the working class. Manufacturing is something that comes later, it is a consequence of the incorporation of machinery.

In historical development, machinery displaces workers from production, first because there are no workers in a position to operate with the machinery because they have the capacities that correspond to the old manual work, and second because we have already seen that the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery is that the dead labor that is incorporated is less than the paid living labor that is eliminated. and then the generation of a working population that capital has left over appeared. So, when he states this, the workers who do not have the attributes that are needed to work with the machinery ("old" workers) and the workers that capital is converting into surplus for its needs, the labor power no longer serves capital and he is going to say that just as it loses its use value, loses its value.

So, this surplus population, which does not serve capital... Here is a description of where it is going to end up. It subsists in the industry which is being annihilated by the development of machinery, one fate it may have is that it still finds employment where there is relatively simple work. So, there is a surplus of labor force that is being offered, and it is going to be sold below value. So what you find there is a tendency that does not mean that manufacturing is resurgent, but that either they stay there where manufacturing is still struggling to survive, or they try to find work in the field of large industry, and since there are too many, they push the wage below the value of the labor force. This is the proposal of what the machinery is doing to the worker and what happens in that movement. One can still see it today, especially in countries like those of Latin America, where this type of situation appears: where does a worker who has lost the use value of his labor

power for large industry get? It can go to the branches that are in the process of being annihilated, and the other thing is to go out and look for work where large industry does not demand developed productive attributes.

I want to make a caveat: capital always needs labor power that reproduces itself under normal conditions (except in very exceptional situations). In general, what happens is that in the branches where he needs normal conditions, this type of worker who lacks productive attributes and so on cannot inflow. But what is going to appear here, the labor power selling itself below value, can occur in part of the movement of capital where it does not need a labor power that has the fullness of productive attributes. I don't know if I'm answering you with this.

[...][208] In one of the sections that follow, the situation will appear the other way around. What do the ideologues of capital do with respect to... How do they hold on to the materiality of the machine to defend the capitalist use of machinery? That the machine is the one that has all the virtues (I don't want to get ahead of myself) that it relieves work, etc. And what is going to appear is that it does the opposite. Then, the workers start... I don't remember the Luddite movement when it reached its peak, because it seems to me that it was during the nineteenth century.

Javiera: 1811-1816, he says.

JIC: Yes. That's it, it's organizing to destroy machines. Then this movement no longer appears: it is the struggle for the working day, for education. So, it is to confront capital as capital, not as a machine. We have to think that the so-called "Industrial Revolution" is from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and this is the immediate reaction. If one looks at it in the concrete determinations, several things appear that emerge. At the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the first half of the nineteenth, workers were forbidden to associate, to form guilds. Smith poses it as a fact saying that the workers always have the upper hand because they are not allowed to associate no matter how much they want to. At a time when any form of association demanding working conditions is violently repressed, one form of protest is to destroy the machine, which produces immediate misery for me.

One can see a big difference there, when the communist and socialist movements appear in the nineteenth century, and the Chartist movement appears, which is to lower the amount of patrimony that must be had to be able to participate in elections, and it already implies a whole development of the organizational structure of the working class. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this was completely dismantled, with the argument of the obstacles to the development of capital that the feudal guild puts in place, as an "advance of freedom", it is that the workers cannot unionize, because it appears as a synonym of feudal society. So, that may have played a role in why you start with machinery and then recognize as a subject not the machinery but capital.

[208] Continuing with the Luddism thing.

I complete one more thing in the section, where Marx is going to contrast what he develops at the end of the chapter on manufacturing, where the workers could use as a weapon against capital the intervention of their subjectivity in the handling of the tool. Now this has been reversed and the capitalists use machinery as a weapon against the workers. And it refers to strikes, uprisings, and all workers' movements against capital. With that we would have completed point 5, let's go to point 6: the theory of compensation [...].

6. The theory of compensation, with respect to the workers displaced by machinery.

This theory says that the displaced worker will find work in the production of machinery. This has to do with a series of discussions regarding classical economics, which start from the "wage fund", an amount of social wealth that is given and will always end up in the hands of the working population. How is it explained that the wage fund does not decrease when the workers are expelled from production? By the theory of compensation.

Beyond this, what is capitalist apologetics going to propose? The ideological discourse of capital is going to appear... Just as the workers begin by confronting the machine and then recognize in the social relation the cause of what happens to them, the ideologues of the capitalists are going to start by stating that there is no reason for these antagonistic relations, for this opposition of the workers, because in reality the machinery itself appears full of virtues for the worker: it allows the shortening of working time (but under the capitalist form what it does is lengthen the working day), it facilitates work (under the capitalist form it increases the intensity of work), which is the triumph of the human being over the forces of nature (and its capitalist use what it does is destroy, impoverish the nature of the worker). Everything appears the other way around, what the apologist does is look at the machine as such and not capitalist use, and says that there is no reason for the resistance of the workers. Then the two forms of production of consciousness contrast, from the worker who passes from the machine to its capitalist use, to the capitalist who remains in the machine to empty it of the concrete forms of use by capital.

Marx is going to propose the theory of compensation on the basis of what we have already seen, that throughout the useful life of the machinery – and not in its immediacy – the total amount of living labour that is going to be replaced by the use of machinery is going to be greater than the amount of living labour that was applied to the production of the machine. For the machine is incorporated only if the dead labour added to the value of each unit of commodities is less than the paid living labour which is saved by its use. Then, since the worker works all day (paid/unpaid living labor) and the machine is the product of a smaller amount of labor than the worker would have done (paid/unpaid), the decrease in total labor and what appeared as surplus population is inevitable.

I make a reservation in this: in immediate motion it may happen that the production of machinery, which carries a quantity of labour which is massively

placed in it, then consumes the use-value of the machinery and its value gradually, but the machine absorbs a mass of labour at the moment of production. and the cheapening of the commodities produced by the incorporation of machinery may have the immediate effect of bringing these surplus labourers back into production. But in the unity of motion, necessarily the quantity of labour which was substituted by the use of machinery is greater than that which would have been performed, and consequently the need for labour power by capital will have been reduced.

The last question that appears in this section is the question of the social division of labor. Marx went on to argue that manufacturing appeared as the way par excellence to multiply the social division of labor. Marx is going to contrast it with the development of large-scale industry and what he is going to propose is that as the productive force of labor multiplies immeasurably more, it multiplies the movement of capital and at the same time strengthens the social division of labor. With that we have section 6.

[I skip repeated questions, except for clarification to Alejandro about the possibility of the displaced finding a new buyer for their labor force.]

Here there is an issue that is not explicit and then we will see what it plays a role. When we look at reproduction, it will appear that every year (to take it that way) there is a new capital which is the surplus value of the previous year, which has become new capital, and is the source of the demand for new workers. Now, if workers are displaced from production and there are also new workers, the supply of labor force this year will be multiplied by two sides: the displaced and the new workers. So, it is implicit, in a game of this, what happens with the movement of influx of new workers. That later we are going to see all the complex development, because it is not simply linked to the birth of new workers.

Marx will strongly discuss those proposals that the supply of labor power depends on the birth rate of the working population. But then, the new capital comes from the one that was valued in the previous movement, which includes an increase in the rate of surplus value, because with the incorporation of the machinery that displaced these workers, their means of subsistence were cheapened and now there is more relative surplus value. Therefore, capital, with respect to year 0 passing to year 1, when from year 1 to year 2, in principle has relatively more surplus value and consequently more capacity to accumulate. Since it is also a larger capital that passes from 1 to 2 than that which passed from 0 to 1, because what until now was absolute surplus value plus what was incorporated as new relative surplus value, there is an increased power to accumulate capital, and consequently, the demand for labor power...

If the supply increases on the side of the working population that increases and on that of the workers displaced from the previous cycle, on the other hand capital also increases on the side of the simple extraction of surplus value that was done previously plus the increase in the rate of surplus value that the incorporation of machinery implied. That's where expanded capital comes from, it's growing all the time. Now, put in simple terms, if it grows without surplus value relative to the

rate at which the working population grows, it will find demand for its labor power. If relative surplus value appears there through the machinery that displaces workers, to those who would have been incorporated this is simply added, but the growth of capital was enhanced with respect to the previous one. So, it is a problem of proportions in immediate movement. In the long run there is an incorporation of less living labor than was displaced, and therefore there are workers who in the unity of reproduction will be superfluous. But we're going to see that later.

Javiera: I have a doubt about this about the struggle of the worker against the machine. In political terms, is it reactionary for the working class to rebel against the machinery? Given that the development of the productive forces advances and portions of the working class are being displaced, what is to be done there, given that it is like a law of capitalism?

JIC: This is going to appear when we look at the reproduction of capital, and when we look at what I want to raise in this part of the system of machinery in large-scale industry that is not in *Capital*. The answer at this point is very abstract: if this is the development of the productive forces, to oppose the development of machinery is to go against the development of the productive forces. But what one has in front of us with what we have so far is that this expresses what always happens to the working class, it is done at the expense of the working class, and it is confronted with this contradictory determination.

Javiera: What happens is that this in political terms is an issue. Recently there was here in Chile, in a very conflictive area of Valparaíso where there are many companies along the entire coastline (coal and...), and Boric raised the issue of the closure of one of the CODELCO companies[209], which is a national company. There was quite a stir and the CODELCO workers began to propose... Nothing, against the government, which was a government of the workers... But the point is that the company of which Boric decreed the closure is totally unproductive, the machinery is very obsolete, in terms of waste it contaminates the entire town in the coastal area... What is being done? You have to have a solution, you are going to have to close companies of that type, but well, the company is not there in the background to advance in the development of the machinery that is used today in China, for example, very efficient to work with copper waste. So, what solution does the working class offer for this population that is going to be displaced? It's a problem that deep down you have to think about, isn't it?

JIC: There are many concrete determinations to get there, but this is it.

Since everything the working class does is at its expense... These are the contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production, and many of them do not have—let's call it, in the abstract—"good" solution. It would be necessary to see what they intend to do with these workers, if capital is going to expand to absorb them... This is what happens to the working class when it assumes the representation of capital that exploits itself. Why should such a situation have a

[209] National copper cooperation.

resolution that kicks the capitalist mode of production? It depends on what that specific process of capital accumulation is, where it is going to "shoot", to put it that way. I don't know what Boric plans to do with that.

Javiera: Anyway, the closure of the company appeared as if it was so as not to further contaminate the population there, which was for the children, but in reality that is not the reason, it is because it has been in the red for years.

JIC: They are real determinations but they are put forward as ideological forms to sweeten the movement of liquidation of a capital that can no longer be sustained in its process of accumulation and that at the same time supposedly threatens the general movement of accumulation in that place via pollution.

Javiera: But beyond the specific case, I gave it as an example of this. If Marx is talking about the working class organizing against the capitalist social form, well, come on, it organizes there, but if it organizes against the machinery or the development of the productive forces, it's a reactionary organization, isn't it?

JIC: It is born from that contradiction. When one looks at machinery, from the abstract point of view of human labor it is full of virtues, and the capitalist machinery does just the opposite. I propose to you, when we go further (and going beyond Marx's development in Capital), to ask ourselves whether the working class can take the personification of capital into its own hands and what it faces in this form. Because it continues to face a social relationship that continues to be alienated, that everything it does with the power that it gives it to take directly the management of capital for the development of the productive forces of social labor, is accompanied by the increase of the surplus population. So, he is going to face that contradiction, which on a small scale is in that specific case, but which is present all the time.

Here there was a different version at some point, there appeared at the end of 1990 and the beginning of 2000, when there were very high unemployment rates, a proposal that civil works had to be done without machinery, with which it was going to incorporate a very large workforce because... Individuals who instead of using a bulldozer used a pick and shovel, would take a lot. And it was raised as a demand for political action. And here is that contradiction that you raised.

One must not forget that the working class is working class *because of capital*, it is not that capital is capital because it is working class. First we found capital and it is this that told us that there had to be doubly free workers, and it is the existence of these workers for capital that told us that there had to be a working class. Development is not the other way around. This is what one has in front of one when one looks at the action of the working class itself: it is a form of the movement of capital. [...] We saw it: the working class needs to demand a wage increase in order to defend the value of its labor power. If the working class triumphs in this struggle to raise wages, it makes it easier for capital to incorporate machinery, and therefore the multiplication of the working population that capital has left over, and therefore, the lowering of wages. And these are the determinations that the working class faces. There is no movement that is external

to the movement of capital: it is the movement of capital that takes that form. So, does the working class have to fight to increase wages or not to increase them? In general it has to fight to increase it, I have no doubt, and also what Marx proposes is that it is the only way for it to be sold for its value. But at the same time it is the bearer of that determination.

7. Repulsion and attraction of workers as mechanized industry develops. Crisis of the cotton industry.

We move forward with the section that follows. It is the movement that capital is going to make with respect to the expulsion and incorporation of labor force. And what underlies all this... There is a contradiction that is always present from the point of view of capital. With the development of the production of relative surplus value in general but in particular with machinery, constant capital which does not produce surplus value grows faster and at the expense of variable capital which produces surplus value, in order to achieve a *more intense* valorization of variable capital. And then, we had been looking at the need for labor power as a question that was linked to the increase in the scale of material production, what appears to us now with this surplus population is what happens to the movement not of increase in the scale of production, but of capital. So, Marx is going to unfold something that I am going to synthesize in a series of points.

The first is that the relative decrease in the number of workers employed does not mean that there can be an absolute increase in the number of workers employed if the scale of production increases. At the same time, what is going to appear to mediate this increase in the absolute number of workers is this movement in which the constant capital in raw materials and machinery increases, and the variable capital decreases. And that then, the increase in the demand for labor power, with the number of workers who are going to find a buyer, has as a condition that total capital grows proportionally much faster than variable capital. […] So, what Marx is going to propose is that this process [...] takes the form of a cyclical movement: there are moments of expansion and movements of contraction, in what he is going to call the industrial cycle.

So, apart from what happens in the long run in the movement of demand for labor power, of the number of workers who are going to be incorporated into the production process, there appears a movement of repulsion of workers in the moments of depression of the cycle, and moments in which the demand for labor power expands in that cyclical movement. And that all the time within these movements, there are changes in the sex, age and skill of the workers. There is a general movement which in turn has the form of a movement of a cyclical character. And what is marked, and for me later will have a central role in the development of what happens to the surplus population, is an observation that shows that total capital has to grow proportionately much faster and more and more with respect to the growth of variable capital, because constant capital occupies a relatively larger and larger part of that total capital. it needs to accelerate to maintain a variable rate of capital growth.

If we had a total capital that over time remains the same (if there were no accumulation, in the sense that there is always the same mass of total capital), with the development in the production of relative surplus value it happens that constant capital will be a larger and larger part in relative and absolute terms. In order for variable capital to maintain its magnitude, it is necessary that the total capital is not always equal, it has to be larger and larger so that although the variable capital is relatively smaller, it maintains its magnitude. But as the rate of surplus-value grows more and more, the total capital must grow not proportionally [he shows a drawing of a straight diagonal: "/"] but more than proportionally [he shows a line more and more curved upwards, like a "U" cut in half], if only in order for the variable capital to maintain its magnitude.

Javiera: In crude terms, in order for this variable capital to be maintained, is it like saying that in the factory there have to be more and more machines than workers who are in those machines so that it remains like the...?

JIC: It's not exactly... This is taken in terms of capital mass, in value. In order for there to be a number of workers to be sustained, it is not because there will be more machinery (which there will be), but because each time in order to maintain a certain magnitude of variable capital, a more than proportional growth of total capital is necessary, not only a greater proportion, more accelerated.

Alejandro: And if this more than proportional growth of constant capital and this increase of variable capital are maintained, it will not... accompanied by the entry of new generations of workers, there began to be a magnitude of the working population that could not find a buyer for its labor force.

JIC: Yes, and more workers expelled from production. On both sides.

Iván: Juan, could it be that we are at the limit of that process? What I see is that there is beginning to be such a high technological capacity that machinery has already replaced the workforce that acted as an appendage of machinery almost in its entirety. We are even going through a stage in which there was a working class that was dedicated to controlling the automatic processes of the machine, but these dark factories begin to appear that seem to have no controllers of the machinery, where the worker ceases to be an appendage of the machinery and appears as a controller or directly a creator of that machinery. But at the same time there is a very large mass of surplus population, and already that form of the process seems to be beginning to be replaced, the worker ceases to appear as an appendage of the machinery and is simply located in the part of control and creation and at the same time there is a surplus population that is excluded in that process.

JIC: That goes about concrete forms that we still don't have here or the general conditions. In any case, the worker who is on the control board is an appendage of the machine. Its function is to check that the machine does not go out of its automatic control, to intervene if it goes out. Now, how far can the development of machinery go? It remains to be seen, because it has... One of the virtues of old age is

that one has heard that *transformation cannot happen from here*, and it has gone over those technical points. But let us look at it when we look at the process of reproduction, not the simple process of production, but that of accumulation.

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8. Revolution operated by large-scale industry in manufacturing, crafts and home industry.[210]

[Clarification on "domestic work"] Domestic work is not work within the reproduction of family life: it is home work, what in English is called *putting-out system*, the production of commodities in the family environment for a capitalist. A lot of garment making and mechanical manual work has this shape.

So, the increase in labor productivity with the development of machinery in large industry will sweep away all manual labor processes. Especially what happens with labor processes that have an individual character, both in the division of labor in manufacturing and home work. Here what is developed is this combined labor process, and the powers of the use of machinery. The division of labor in manufacturing and home work cannot compete with the labor productivity of large industry. The only way it will be able to sustain itself is by cheapening and exploiting more and more the labor force it puts into action.

Here the condition of the limitation of the working day immediately appears. Direct regulation in the form of a law that has a mandatory character is the bearer of the liquidation of these other forms of production. By regulating the length of the working day, manual work that could subsist on the basis of an "indefinite" extension of the working day and the intensity of work can no longer be sustained. And then, all those that seemed to be "natural" obstacles (Marx's irony) to the limitation of the working day are overcome in the form of a direct regulation that has a coercive character. This direct regulation is a form of indirect regulation, which in turn enhances indirect regulation because the shortening of the working day is a condition for increasing the intensity of work. This is what I was thinking of raising on point 8, I do not know if you want to raise something on this point.

Alejandro: When I faced the question of the home delivery industry regarding what you mentioned, Juan, I saw forms very close to what I see day to day in Argentina, but not with the same character. For example, self-employment. It's very advanced compared to what we are now, but I wonder how it is possible that those ... let's call them "productive units" on a small scale, and how within them we have links of personal dependence on which the [...][211].

JIC: Yes, not only is it sustained in opposition to what Marx proposes, but this form of production is multiplied. But for that we have to go and look even far

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[210] * After 20 minutes of the session they realize that they were with the point 9 and it was time for the 8, I place it in its corresponding place and then we continue with the 9.

[211] Inaudible.

beyond development, even in Volume 3, with respect to national forms and so on. In any case, when we get to the chapters of reproduction and see the general law of capitalist accumulation we are going to look at determinations of that; why a process of capital accumulation points more and more in that direction, that requires another series of determinations, but in any case the general character of why, beyond the case of this national process, what happens to the working population – which has already appeared in this chapter – that capital has in excess, and that now there will also be a reference to that... We are going to have more determinations deployed.

9. Factory legislation. (Health and educational clauses.) Its generalization in England.

In the chapter, except for some issues that appear regarding child and female labor, in general the development revolves around the movement of autonomous regulation of the process of social life. And this point 9 focuses on the need for this autonomous regulation to take the form of direct regulations, which will extend not only to the workplace, but also to the process of production of labor power, until the dissolution of bonds of personal dependence replaced by impersonal bonds typical of the social relationship mediated by capital. All factory legislation is an expression of a direct regulation by the state as a form of the movement of capital itself, it is not the opposite, but the forms it necessarily takes.

Here again appears an expression that I had proposed to you before where Marx is going to state that factory legislation is the "first conscious and *systematic* reaction of society against the elementary march of its production process."[212] The questioning is the abstract character of the subject that is posed as if reacting, because it is not society that reacts. It is society as an expression of its general social relation, its direct regulation does not occur outside the general social relation. So, to put it as a "reaction of society"... One needs to advance on the concrete determination of that reaction that is a need of the concrete subject of the process of social life. And Marx is going to propose that this is linked to the development of machinery.

[Iván mentions that on the one hand there is a struggle of the workers' movement, but that other social subjects also appear such as factory inspectors, representatives of the Church, etc., or more comprehensive expressions]

JIC: Let's go back to the beginning. What is the general social relationship? And if this is, then all one is going to see are concrete forms of this general social relation. We saw the consciousness of the commodity owner. Then we will look at more determinations of the consciousness of the worker and the capitalist. But what we had is that the worker needs to sell his labor power, etc. I'll leave it at that, but it would be essentially: what is outside of capital? How do you explain these needs for action from outside the movement of capital? And why is it that sometimes

[212] Marx, K. (1977: 402), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico: FCE

there is a historical moment that has strength but has been dragging a previous historical period where it does not have it?

From the point of view of the abstract form, which carries potency as a potency to be realized, determination appears as a necessity that can take different concrete forms. From the point of view of the concrete form, which fell to be the realization of one of those aspects of the power to be determined, it seems that it was accidental, that it had no need from which it has arisen. So, the factory inspectors are personifications of capital. The workers are determined in their personification as personifications of the labor power put to work by capital. We are all determined by this general social relation in different concrete forms. Why do factory inspections appear? Because the need for something to be done with the specific working conditions is beginning to appear. Marx is going to put it there: the fixing of the working day, the obligation of the working day, is what liquidates a whole series of conditions of production that, left to the movement "not governed" by this direct regulation, could have survived. So why look at critical factory inspectors/the struggle of the working class as if they were not an expression of a need of capital?

[…] We saw that the capitalist mode of production permanently revolutionizes the consciousness and will of individuals as alienated subjects in capital, and then what was accepted as normal at one point ceases to be normal when the subsequent transformation revolutionized the material conditions of production so that there are individuals who have to have other personal attributes. And this is what you have in front of you. If there is another determination, if, let us suppose, the factory inspectors come from outside the movement of capital, then it is necessary to explain what social relation they are the bearers of. And the problem – and this appears a lot in the discussions in the courses – of posing that it comes from something that is outside, is that then before finding the commodity as a general form of the social relation, and before finding consciousness alienated in the commodity, one would have to find that other social relation that has the power to operate on the capitalist mode of production itself. If one asks: "let's see where there is another power other than this," once one begins and encountered the capitalist mode of production and these determinations, one finds that they are all forms of this. […] One also finds that all the relations proper to the previous mode of production are becoming forms of the movement of capital.

[...] My objection is to the form of exposition, because it lends itself to separating society on the one hand and capital on the other. […] I'm going to make a detour because all this made me think about... There was at one point when an English neo-Ricardian Marxist wrote a book called *Marx after Sraffa*[213], [about] what was left of Marx once Sraffa destroyed the determinations of value, and in particular of the prices of production by value (in these people's conception). This guy's name was Steedman. And then there was another one who in a *Capital & Class* , called "Hobson" or something like that[214], wrote an article called "Marx after Steedman." And what is left after Steedman? All this value and so on has been "demonstrated" to be useless, and what remains is the moral condemnation of capitalism. And then,

[213] Book by Ian Steedman (*Marx After Sraffa*, 1977).
[214] It seems to be Bruce Roberts who is the author.

it is to empty the content of the social relation to reduce it to relations between naturally free individuals who have moral behaviors, and Marx appears in that article as a moral individual who reacts critically by condemning the barbarity of the capitalist mode of production... Which, by the way, is barbarism, but it is not explained by barbarism, but by the form that this social relationship has and by the role it plays in history.

[Edgardo mentions that he read that position in Jacobin magazine, and JIC replies that those who write there are *more or less* those who were in *Capital & Class*.]

[…][215]

Javiera: In point 9 then you return to the need for a coercive law of the state to be imposed. I would like to go back to that because, for example, in the chapter when we were looking at the struggle between the worker and the machine, Marx was already talking about the factory code, and at one point he talks about how the very improvement of machinery required the perfection of the factory building, and how that would benefit the workers. So, as we have been reviewing, the worker is subject to the machinery, and it is like this improvement of the machine that in turn imposes the need to improve the conditions of the labor force.

JIC: It comes first of all from the way in which the process of social life, of capital, is organized. When the machine appeared, what we had was that now the worker confronts capital and presents himself to it in a material form: the machine to which he is subjected and dominates it. That is why, when the struggle of the worker against the machine begins, it begins as a confrontation as if the subject were the machine and then in historical development it appears to him that the problem is not the machinery but its capitalist use. So what happens to capital with this use of machinery? That needs appear that are contradictory. Since machinery, if not in use, does not transfer its value to the product and deteriorates, it needs to extend the working day indefinitely. When machinery imposes itself, it imposes (let us take it in the simplest form) an increasing intensity of labor. Because as the machine works faster, the worker has to have more intensity to serve it. And capital has the contradictory necessity that in order to make use of the machine, if the working day has no limit, the worker ends up not being able to function as an appendage of this machinery.

We had seen the same with education and child labor. The use of machinery, as it simplifies work, makes it possible to multiply child labour. And at the same time, this multiplication of child labor, the extension of the working day for minors, clashes with a need of capital, which is that these individuals do not prematurely exhaust their labor power and that they develop certain general knowledge to be able to function as an appendage of machinery and be flexible to change jobs. So it is a necessity of capital to extend child labor and limit child labor. And both needs are going to be personified by different human individuals, and in some cases by the same subjects in different roles.

[215] I return to the development here after exposition in altered order of point 8.

When all these laws are voted on, there is not a single representative of the working class in the English parliament. They are representatives of the capitalist class — let us disregard those of the landlord class — in particular the House of Commons. As individual capitalists they need to extend the working day, and it doesn't matter to them that the workers die working, but as personifications of the total capital of society they need to express this condition of the general unity of the limit of the working day, the educational process, etc. Who is the bearer of this need for the total capital of society? Essentially it is the working class, because it is a need that coincides with the immediate need to reproduce itself as living subjects, as labor power. This need for capital takes the form of having an antagonistic relation to capital, and yet it is a need for the total capital of society.

One is always looking at this, and one will find it in the concrete forms of... Not in the immediacy that it is a need of capital, but that it will appear as if it is a need of the human being, which is what corresponds, and on the other hand they are going to say that these are a bunch of lazy people who do not want to work and that is why they want their working day to be shortened. It seems that they have no more reason than that which presents itself to the immediate consciousness of the subjects. But what is presented to them has a content that necessarily has that form.

We had this about how factory legislation was born as a concrete form of the production of relative surplus value through the system of machinery in large-scale industry. And all these transformations that are becoming manifest through direct regulation have all the time the contradictory character that at the same time that they are a development of the productive forces of the human subject, under the capitalist form they are nothing more than a way of increasing exploitation, it is an empowerment of human subjectivity under the concrete form of the barbarism of capital. Marx is going to make this counterpoint all the time throughout *Capital*. And here this is going to appear in particular with respect to teaching.

Education will appear as a condition for the factory system, so there will be legislation that makes the educational process mandatory. And when one looks at the content that transcends the movement of capital, this content of the development of the human generic being, Marx is going to state that this is anticipating what is coming. And he talks about the germ of the education of the future that states that all children are going to go through an educational process that combines productive labor with teaching, and – something that is striking for the time, but which is very German – gymnastics. And that this is the way to produce human beings who are fully developed. Not simply as a method to intensify social production, but to produce human beings in the fullness of their development. And here is going to appear what happens with science.

It basically appears as a science, a development of the conscious organization of social labor, but which is fragmented within each individual capital by the private character of labor. It is a science that needs to be able to regulate mechanical movements, to break down movements into simple movements in order to be able

to control them in the production process. It is not a science that needs to answer why it is that movement itself: what it needs is to operate on the manifestation of that movement. And so, this science of natural processes needs to be developed.

What we were saying: with the development of machinery, it is necessary to objectively control the natural determinations that operate in the production process, it is necessary to transform technologically, to dominate these forces, incorporating that control into the machinery. And then, a determination appears that is not developed here, but what historically specific form appears by the organization of the materiality of the labor process, not abstractly by the general determination of the social relation (which is already born from there). He goes on to show how machinery revolutionizes the labor process, the technical bases of production, and consequently how it transforms the different functions of the worker's work, how the labor process, the division of labor, is combined in the collective worker, and causes there to be a mass of capital and consequently of workers who pass from one branch of production to another and requires workers who have the attributes that correspond to this permanent mobility.

And yet this contrast reappears: he is talking about an individual who tends to have "universal" attributes (with the scope that corresponds to each epoch) and he makes the contrast by saying that all this destroys the old division of labor, and at the same time makes all these transformations at the expense of the conditions of reproduction of labor power. because they are permanently threatened with being displaced from production, due to the waste of the labor force with precarious working conditions; and the contrast with what happens within each individual capital and what happens in the general unit appears again. And he is going to summarize it with a phrase that I think refers to some discussion with Proudhon about the "good side" and the "bad side" of things, and he says that this is the negative side of the phenomenon. This whole process is showing the advance of a human subject with increasingly developed individual and collective productive forces, and at the same time, under the capitalist form, it means the annihilation of those same attributes.

Javiera: So far it has not been said which subject personifies science?

JIC: No. If I remember correctly, the capitalists have already appeared as oblivious to that, but the workers do not appear as... except for maintenance workers who have some scientific training. Here in general we are talking about elementary educational training, with the scope of the time. [...] I propose to you, at the end of this chapter or the next, to return to the form of the scientific method that corresponds to this historical determination of the method and to the transformations in the materiality of labor that one faces in the 150 years that have elapsed since the time Marx wrote until today and what transformations there are then in what a worker is. And then look at who is the subject of science.

Marx continues with this contradictory character of the movement of capital by saying that all this development occurs as a "natural" law of the capitalist mode of production, but what it entails is a need for capital to transform the workers into individuals who are in conditions for that permanent transformation that the

materiality of labor demands. It is necessary to replace a partial individual, which is what appeared with the division of labor in manufacturing, who performs a minimum task, by individuals who are fully developed.

[...][216] Here what appears is the need to overcome the capitalist mode of production posed as a matter of life or death, it is not posed as springing from the movement of capital itself. By saying: it is necessary to overcome the forms that correspond in the capitalist mode of production to this development that we are looking at, because they contain all these annihilations, these contradictory movements. And then it is necessary for human life, not for the capitalist mode of production, to overcome... The masses of the working population that are left over for the movement of capital, who are kept in misery, by a full availability of human beings who have this "universal" condition and who operate, who are capable of performing various functions in the life of society.

All this always goes back to some observation of Marx's early developments regarding the individual with universal attributes, but not yet in relation to the development of the capitalist mode of production but as a question of ... An individual whose all forms of activity are expressions of a generic human condition. And then, if I remember correctly in *The German Ideology*, he is talking about the individual who in the morning cultivates the land, in the afternoon is a tailor and at night is a "critical critic". Since he has all aspects of material and "spiritual" life—let us call it that, abstractly—they are all manifestations of his condition of being generically human. Here appears the need to overcome the capitalist mode of production as an abstract expression and not as a power that springs from the capitalist mode of production, it is not present where the capacity to overcome it springs from. I don't know if it was clear, because I started badly, confusing myself with something else.

Alejandro: Could it be that it also appears in this form in the *Manuscripts* of 1844?

JIC: It sounds more familiar to me than it is in the *German Ideology* because it has the irony of being a "critical critic". It appears all the time throughout development, but it appears that the capitalist mode of production is making all these transformations, not that these transformations lead it to its supersession, as an affirmation of the generic human being, which can be seen as external to the movement of the capitalist mode of production itself.

Alejandro: And there are a series of proposals that cling to that appearance, right?

JIC: It is dominant within Marxism, or even the proper form of Marxism.

What follows also refers to the fact that this is a first step, but that the inevitable conquest of political power by the working class will lead to the development of that educational system that is in the germ of the capitalist mode of production.

[216] He says he got confused and explains again.

And here, yes, as a closure of all this that they are conditions of life or death, and that the working class is going to conquer political power, and consequently what is at stake is no longer simply the regulation of production within each unit but the organization of the very unity of the process of social life, that capitalist forms are opposed to these revolutionary ferments and the goal is the abolition of the old division of labor, that is, the production of a human subject who is the full bearer of his generic being: he is no longer subjected to a partial task but has the capacity to affirm himself in his productive activity as a being who transcends all specific limitations in the exercise of his vital activity.

Here comes the clarification where it says that "However, the only historical way by which the contradictions of a historical form of production can be destroyed and transformed is the development of those same contradictions."[217] The development of these contradictions is the way in which the capitalist mode of production carries with it the need to overcome them, it does not appear from outside that movement. It is first posed as an abstractly proper necessity of human life, which is only afterwards posited as a necessity proper to human life that springs from the specific historical form that this general social relation has. I don't know if it was clear or I made too many concoctions... Do you want to raise something?

Alejandro: Throughout this entire expository development of *Capital* there is this thing that elements appear that are presented as mutually external, and as it progresses unity appears. And in this case it is very immediate, but perhaps throughout the development it appears like this or is it a very hairy observation?

JIC: I don't know if it would say "exterior". We have already talked about how the form of exposition that in my opinion Marx uses a lot (but that I don't know if it applies to what is here) starts with the immediate concrete as it is presented, analyzes it, and in the first analysis what appears is the commodity because there is not a full development. There is an analytical process and then there is the unfolding of the concrete forms that unfold that determination, until it reaches a point. In each part of the book he reaches a point, and when he continues to unfold that same point at which he arrived, the way in which he makes the exposition is to go back to the appearance of the immediate concrete, to make an analysis that is now short because he quickly recognizes what he had been developing, and then he unfolds the corresponding determinations.

Chapter I has that unity: it starts with the immediate manifestation, the analysis that has to have a lot of deployment, and then the development of the necessary concrete form. When Chapter II begins, it begins with the fact that it entered into circulation, and it begins with the immediate observation that there it seems that the owners of commodities do what they want with the commodities, they dominate them, and immediately the analysis begins and says: ah no, in reality these are personifications of the commodities. In Chapter III, in the part in which he unfolds the concrete forms, what he shows is that this is not a simple organization of the process of social metabolism mediated by the production of

[217] Marx, K. (1977: 409).

value, by this objectified social relation, but that the purpose of production becomes clear that it is the production of the objectified social relation. But then it cuts and takes on the externality of the money cycle as capital.

I take this as a milestone: chapter IV is analytical, because it asks about the need for what is in front of it, how it can be that it is valued, where the valorization comes from; that acts as a subject, but then what is the condition for it to act as a subject? That he can dispose of a commodity that produces more value than what is bought, and then that commodity has to be labor power, etc. And he began with the immediate appearance, followed the process of analysis, and only chapter V, chapter VI... all those that follow are the unfolding of the need for capital. And actually when you look at the production of relative surplus value... He repeats these things again, because the chapter on the concept of relative surplus value is an analytical chapter, because it is how the production of surplus value is multiplied, and then the productivity of labor must be increased... and then it goes to the concrete form. Then, in the chapters that we have been seeing in general there is a certain step towards an immediate manifestation, but that each one puts the need of the one that follows. So, one could look at this, because of what appears here, which is an external affirmation of development. In the development the need for this did not appear, but it is clarified by saying: it has to spring from here, so we have to continue looking at the development of these contradictions to see where it leads. But I have the impression that this externality has a different character.

It is not that he is presenting the immediate manifestation and saying that he contains this power. Here the affirmation is so immediately placed that it appears rather as external. In some cases there are certain external statements, even in Chapter I there are some statements that are only founded when one sees the unfolding of the form of value. But I don't know if beyond this reflection... I would think that it is not the same exteriority that appears here in what we are looking at specifically, that tearing each unit of the exposition from the immediate manifestation. For me, it has the virtue of this presentation that synthesizes in each little bit the unity of dialectical knowledge, of the reproduction of the concrete through thought, and it has the problem that it can be seen as a leap, and that what came before no longer ... Nothing, on the one hand there is the commodity and on the other the capital, and that the flow of exposure is cut off.

Alejandro: Now that observation you make there is a little clearer to me. But there is also another issue... For example, the role of nature, which in the first chapters is mentioned as external to the human being, and only in chapter V does it point out this organic unity between the human being and nature, and here in this chapter a small observation appears again.

JIC: Anyway, in chapter V... Think that in the first chapter it is stated that material wealth is the product of work and nature. So, since he does not stop to look at the concrete materiality of work, but of work generically, and when he refers to concrete labor he gives examples but he is not putting what work is as such. It is true, for me it is preferable to put it forward and not wait until we look at the capitalist form of work, which since it has the double character of being a

material process, first we look at the material process and this relationship of the human being and nature appears. I put it forward because of the discussions that exist about the immateriality of abstract labor. So, for me it is essential to start by putting its material character first.

There are several times that things like this appear. In fact, the juridical forms, referred to in Chapter II, pass by that reference, and then only appear in these chapters as forms that spring from the movement of capital itself, not simply from the movement of commodities. And the state appears many times in chapter III (I don't remember if it was already in chapter II as a necessity of a general nature) and the determinations of the state as a direct unit of this process of social metabolism that within it is governed by an indirect social relationship are not developed. And in fact in *Capital* the state is referred to a lot of times, but it is not referred to as a concrete form of capital itself, as a representative of the total capital of society, it appears externally.

So, we had this as a development of the contradictions themselves. Here also appears an expression that is before reaching this, and it is when he speaks of the factory legislation "[...] as the first concession barely wrested from capital."[218] It appears as if capital *is yielding* to something other than its own need. That is the concrete form, but again, there is erased that the content of that concrete form... Which, first, is not a concession, but a necessity of the movement itself of this social relation. The expression that feeds the image of the externality of the political action of the working class. And I think that, like everything else, it has to be subjected to criticism and marked what consequences this type of expression has had for the political action of the working class itself.

In this development of a direct regulation of social labor, which until now, was first unfolding as something that simply affected the interior of the production unit, which regulates the work of the factory, what it is going to show is how it transcends that sphere, where it seemed that it clashed with the right of exploitation of capital. Now, through the development that he is going to make of home work, he appears to clash not simply with this indirect social relationship, but with the bonds of personal dependence, because direct regulation of paternal authority seems to be advancing, because in home work the prohibition of child labor, the obligatory nature of education, etc. And he says that this "interference" in paternal authority stopped the English parliament from the need to advance in all these transformations.

How does this transformation take place within these bonds of personal dependence? Within these bonds there appears a bond that is proper to mutually free individuals (as are legal relations): the right of children appears against the power of the parents. And then, where there is a bond of personal dependence—because there still are—that becomes the form of the general social bond. Minors, who are not free individuals because they cannot buy and sell commodity, nevertheless become recognized for the relationships of personal dependence with the attributes proper to free individuals.

[218] Marx, K. (1977: 409).

Here Marx's development of where the process of human life is heading in the form of the capitalist mode of production reappears, where he starts by saying: it is not the abuse of paternal power that imposes the need to limit that power, it is the other way around. It is what the capitalist mode of production does with respect to paternal power that imposes the need to limit it. It transforms that paternal power into an "abuse" by destroying the economic base on which that paternal power was sustained in previous modes of production. And here comes the whole development of the contradiction of what the dissolution of these bonds of personal dependence implies, and he says: "And, however dreadful and repugnant the dissolution of the old family within the capitalist system may seem to us," and it is... the tear, the power that encloses the dissolution of that bond, because he says that

> By assigning to women, young people, and children of both sexes a decisive role in the socially organized processes of production, and thereby tearing them out of the domestic sphere, large-scale industry creates the new economic basis for a higher form of family and relations between the sexes[219].

And then, the collective worker who appears to be made up of individuals of different ages and sexes, under this primitive and brutal capitalist form, will necessarily become "a source of human progress."[220] And back there is the content, which is a development of human generic subjectivity, under the concrete form that at the same time negates that development, which is the development of capital.

Javiera: In these pages he does not develop it, but he raises important things. One of them is that of small capital, and how they are going to be swept away by legislation, and this by the transformation of the family. And it seems to me that until now it had not appeared like this in the case of child labor, etc. But here is this explanation that it is not the abuse of paternal authority that is limited, but the other way around... It seems to me that these two things that have emerged from the analysis are relevant. I imagine that this thing about how small capitals are displaced will be seen in the second or third volume, but here at least it appears.

JIC: Here what appears are the capitals that are immediately defeated by competition, and at the same time by the form that competition takes through the direct regulation of the state. Because what is regulating many of these things are the forms of competition. The fixing of a compulsory working day prevents workers from competing with each other by offering capital their labour power with a longer working day. So, here what appears is this destruction, which does not appear as "small capitals" in the eastern sense, but as the capitals and the forms of production that are becoming obsolete, that do not have the capacity to incorporate machinery and that, again, is direct regulation as a form of competition that liquidates these capitals that are not capable of keeping up with the rhythm of the general movement of accumulation.

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[219] Ibid., p. 410.
[220] Ibid.

About this type of production... Because now comes that of agriculture, where Marx is going to make this manifest again, but as with particular obstacles in agricultural production, and in Volume 3 there are going to be references to those who cannot stay in the competition, and then at the end there are going to be more references to producers... but mainly to the temporary subsistence of small agrarian, peasant production. There are other references to passing, always linked to those who are being displaced. When we see in chapters later in this volume, when we see concentration and centralization of capital, what happens to capitals that cannot keep up with this pace.

What follows after this in the development is focused on how the factory law starts from being a condition of exception, which is set for certain productions and becomes a general law. And how then it becomes a demand of capital itself that this law be of a general nature (the right to equal exploitation of labor that we saw before). Then, with this general scope, the role played by direct regulation reappears, no longer as a limitation on the movement of capital, but as an enhancement to the valorization of capital, because it will promote the liquidation of individual production processes on a small scale, with technology that is being left behind, and becomes a power in the process of capital concentration.

And here the double character of this reappears: since it limits the last shelters that the surplus population had, that small industry and home work, this threatens the very movement of capital because it fosters the antagonisms and contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, and fosters, he says, "*the creative elements of a new society and the revolutionary factors of the old society*"[221]. It is a statement that will later play a role; When we come to the corresponding point, we will recognize this kind of affirmation in the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production.

[II]

[Alejandro asks about the education of the future and the need for gymnastics]

Gymnastics is part of the need for the normal reproduction of the body, with one more specific determination: the less work has the character of manual work, or the more it has the character of manual but unilateral, partial work, the more the organism needs physical activity in order to function in a "normal" way. So, the role of physical education is this. In general terms, it appears as a condition of the development of the individual with the potentiality of his or her most developed physical attributes, and at the same time, it appears more as a condition the less physical activity the work has because it is manual, or in the case of a job that physically limits...

One of the forms of occupational disease is precisely the imbalance that occurs... It is very typical of intellectual workers for sitting (and badly) for too long, but it is also typical of manual workers of the manual division of labor that by making a

[221] Ibid., p. 421.

unilateral movement all the time ends up deforming the body. The individual who only exerts force with one arm and makes the same movement, ends up unbalancing the unity of his metabolism, because on the one hand he is working very intensely and on the other hand he has no function. Then, one limb atrophies while the other is overdeveloped.

Gymnastics plays this role, as a need for physical activity, in the face of labor processes that eliminate everything that appears as physical activity – everything is, because "intellectual" work is also physical. And it is very remarkable, in the nineteenth century, the conception that physical education plays a role, appears with manifestations in German society, in those of northern Europe; it does not appear in those terms in other societies. There are texts even from the early twentieth century where references to the importance of gymnastics appear.

[Alexander asks about the necessity of a certain form of gymnastics in a part of the collective worker in relation to other organs of the collective worker.]

So far it was an answer that is generic to the human being, that is not specific to the worker except for professional deformation. But the other is a condition for the reproduction of the human subject. This other does more about what capital demands from the different types of labor power, and consequently what is a necessity from the point of view of the reproduction of that labor power, what is a use value for that reproduction and what is not. We can take this up again when we see the process of reproduction of labor power, of the individual consumption of the worker.

10. Large industry and agriculture

A double movement is going to appear in the sense of what powers large-scale industry has with respect to the material conditions of production and the development of science applied to agricultural production. And the other question that is going to appear... Because all this development of the productive forces of labor is governed by the movement of capital, the same contradiction that we have been seeing throughout this chapter. On the one hand, we will see that it is the condition for the application of science, for the development of a collective labor process, and the consequences of the capitalist form.

From the development of the productive forces, but at the same time as an expression of the capitalist form of this development, the replacement of the peasants by wage-workers will appear. And in this sense, what Marx is going to propose is that the development of large-scale industry in the countryside destroys, revolutionarily transforms the bases on which agrarian production was sustained from what is going to appear as the old society. The first transformation that will appear in this sense is the displacement of the peasants by salaried workers, and consequently, the transformation of the social relations that governed the countryside will be assimilated to the antagonistic social relations that are developing or are developed in the city.

When he shows how this transformation is taking place, what is going to appear is, first, what is dissolving the development of large-scale industry in agriculture. And the first thing he develops is the structure of family production, the manufactures produced by the peasants. It is typical of the peasant organization of production, since agricultural production is with concentrated work in certain seasons, the rest of the time the peasant family is dedicated to the production of manufactures. And large-scale industry is going to sweep away this form of organization and replace it with the conditions for the organization of production that govern large-scale industry.

What is going to appear here is an effect that is not the introduction of large-scale industry in agricultural production, but is the development of large-scale industry, which causes the phenomena of rural-urban migration to occur, and is going to destroy what appeared to be one of the natural bases for the maintenance of agricultural production itself. and it will concentrate the entire workforce in certain points. The reference to the fact that it destroys the basis of the "natural metabolism" between human beings and the land is not explicit, but it refers to when the rural population is abundant, one of the fertilizers for the land is human defecation itself, and as the countryside is depopulated, the possibility of human beings naturally fertilizing the land disappears. What is going to replace that is the need to, on the basis of science and technology, regenerate the balance between human life and nature. Because it says: just as it destroys that natural balance between human beings and nature, it physically destroys human beings themselves. And because it destroys these conditions, it has to regenerate them.

The other question that is going to occur is the function of the work instrument as an instrument of subjugation of the worker. The instrument converted into capital turns the worker into an appendage of the machine, and appears to take away his individual independence. While in the city this loss of individual attributes of the producer turned into a wage-earner has as a counterpart that the concentration of workers develops their capacity to confront capital, in the case of agricultural production, this loss leaves the worker isolated, dispersed, and therefore without the capacity to collectively oppose capital.

And it is going to conclude the development, which is very critical in the proposal, with the fact that this is capitalist exploitation that is destroying the worker and the earth, that when fertility increases from the incorporation of science and technology, it does so at the expense of deteriorating the possibility of the permanent natural reproduction of that fertility. And the synthesis he makes is what he says that

> Capitalist production, therefore, only knows how to develop the technique and the combination of the social process of production, while at the same time undermining the two original sources of all wealth: *the earth and man*.

Marx is sometimes accused of being a productivist in debates about environmentalism and so on, and this part is liked by those who defend Marx on that ground. […] I am going to leave it without developing it until later, when we

see the subsequent transformations that capital accumulation has undergone: what is the limit of this destruction of nature and of the human being?

[Alejandro mentions that the agglomeration in the cities made it impossible to manage the issue of feces, he refers to an investigation of the contamination of the water consumed by the workers...]

Yes, the conditions were brutally those, and they still are those in part of the world. For me there is an expression that Marx uses in one place and that leads to the question precisely of what capital does in its unity with respect to the destruction of the environment. I don't remember where it says that they have turned the River Thames into an open-air sewer. Why at a certain point in the development of the capitalist mode of production did it cease to be so, and now one could bathe in it, and one has fish, if it was a necessity of capital to contaminate it? And (I am going to appeal to the fact that it is national) why does the Riachuelo[222] continue to be an open-air sewer despite the fact that I don't know how many years ago it has been said that it has to stop being that? What are the concrete needs of capital according to the concrete forms that its accumulation has?

[Javiera comments that the land and the human being as sources of wealth shocks her, compared to what was mentioned in another session of the first chapters about the land having no value, and it was said that we would answer it later.]

Be careful, because there are two things to be distinguished, the double character of the commodity as a use value and as a value. What he is going to say is that the earth is the mother, and work is the father of material wealth. Then he is saying this very thing, that he is destroying the basis of material wealth. Insofar as land is not the product of labor, land that is not transformed by human or virgin labor does not contain value because it is not the materialization of abstract labor carried out privately and independently. What appeared is that it has a price, and how do you explain that it has a price if it has no value (because we said that price is the necessary form of value)? Other things without value but with a price appeared, but indeed, the answer to that part is in the final chapters of the penultimate section of Volume 3 if I remember correctly, so there are many years to go. […]

[222] I imagine that he is referring to the Matanza-Riachuelo River, in the Province of Buenos Aires.

§5. THE PRODUCTION OF ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE SURPLUS-VALUE

Chapter XIV. Absolute and relative surplus value.

The chapter [...] is going to be a kind of synthesis of the determinations that we have been seeing. […] The first question that will be developed is what human labor is from the point of view of the double character that the product has in the capitalist mode of production: [...] when human labor is productive from the material point of view, and if simply that condition makes it productive labor from the point of view of the capitalist social relation; who is the subject who produces from one point of view or another.

It will start with the same thing we were seeing. The subject of material production is the worker, and labour from the material point of view is productive to the extent that it produces use-values. In order to be able to perform this productive labor from the material point of view, the worker in the capitalist mode of production may not be doing manual labor, which here appears as the immediate expression of material intervention in the object of labor. And so the collective worker as a collective organ is productive even if some of his workers do not operate *directly* in the material transformation of the product. This is productive in the capitalist mode of production already in the epoch of large-scale industry from the material point of view. But what happens from the point of view of the social form that this has? The first thing to look at is that it is not simply a matter of commodity production, and therefore what we had seen in Chapter I is that productive was the labor that produced value, and here only the labor (and the worker) that valorizes capital is productive.

If productive labor from the material point of view is exercise, the affirmation of the generically human condition, the social form of its organization even appears as the negation of that condition, the destruction of the individual who works in his condition as a human being. So, Marx is going to relate it to the fact that now the concrete subject in the capitalist production process is not the worker, but capital: the valorization of capital is what governs the condition of the production process in which the worker affirms himself as a human being, and it is done at the expense of the human being. That is why he says that it is not a joy to be a productive laborer, but a misfortune.

When we look at the production of absolute surplus value, it was surplus value as a product of capital, and production (and in Marx this way of presenting appears more marked) carried out on the basis of conditions that are not set by capital itself. What did we have? Well, the condition is that labor power is present (and its existence is not put into existence by capital), that it is placed as in the double condition of commodity, and since there is no change in the technical conditions of production when one is looking at the production of absolute surplus value, then, what appears is: capital is producing in the conditions it found, which corresponded to the independent producer of commodities. So, what Marx is going

to propose is that for the production of absolute surplus value the only difference there was the form of relationship between the direct producer and the means of production. The direct producer was a private owner of his means of production, and the only change now is a formal change: he is no longer the owner of those means of production.

Marx is going to synthesize this by stating that absolute surplus value simply implies the formal subjection or formal subsumption of *labor* to capital, there is only a change of form in the social relation, there is no change in the materiality of labor. And he is going to make one more clarification by saying that what is at stake in the production of absolute surplus value is the length of the working day, because the productivity of labor and its intensity are given. On the other hand, the basis of the production of relative surplus value is the permanent revolution of all material, technical conditions of the labour process. And so, what he is going to propose is that the production of relative surplus value *is* the product of the capitalist mode of production. Whereas absolute surplus value appeared to be based on given conditions, the production of relative surplus value is the product of capital itself. And so, this formal subsumption of labor to capital is not enough, now what is going to develop is a real subsumption, he is going to say, of the *worker* to capital.

I make a reference to this of the formal and the real. One can find a trace of it in Hegel's developments, only that in Hegel it is placed as the process of genesis of the Idea, in which the Idea begins with formal exteriority and only develops first as a *formal* relation in its content, and then develops only through real determinations From that content, he discovers what is interior to that content. And it may be that this terminology is used here, although when one looks at the concrete movement one also has the explanation: first only the form of the social relation has changed, and then everything is determined as an attribute of capital. When he says "real subsumption" it means that the worker is now determined as an element in the movement of capital. The worker is already the product of capital itself. If before he was the product of conditions alien to capital, which it subjugated, here the worker has all his attributes, his whole existence (later he will appear) as attributes of capital.

[Javiera asks for examples to clarify formal subsumption.] Marx takes it very strongly in this way, although I have some reservations: think of when the worker who sells labor power appears. The value of labor power is not placed there by the conditions of capital, in the sense that... how is the basket that the working family needs to consume in order to have labor power to sell formed? Because capital demands from the worker certain productive attributes. Marx does not develop it in that way. He says: there is a condition of subsistence and the historical-moral factor. But the reference he makes is not to the capitalist mode of production, it is to previous social forms, to how they are accustomed, how that individual was produced. When it goes to the development of the material process of production, simple cooperation appears, artisans who were previously independent (private owners of their means of production) and the only thing that has changed is that they are separated from the means of production. It is the only difference in the

worker who enters for the first time into the production of relative surplus-value in simple co-operation. Why do you make this proposal?

In formal subsumption, the only thing that is at stake is the length of the working day, because it is: it took all the conditions that were given, formally changed the social condition of this individual – he is no longer free, he is now doubly free – but he works like that same individual. And, in fact, [...] the development of the material process of production in the chapter on [absolute surplus value] [223]is a description of the human being in general (when it begins with the bee and the worker, etc.), until at the end of that section it says: but here the worker works under the control, the direction of the capitalist [...]. And that is where he goes on to look at the other character of the production process, it goes out of the general labor process and enters into the process of valorization.

That worker, who is not a slave, a serf, or the member of a primitive community... What one knows so far is that the free artisan was a free individual who works with his own means of production, but there is a change in the form, and from there all the development begins. When it starts in the development of relative surplus value in simple cooperation, what appears is that this individual now has a change in the materiality of his work, he cooperates with others, something that the one we knew could not do. So, what's the bottom line? As they advance, each time the conditions of that worker are set by the materiality of the capitalist labor process, and what is going to appear is that now he is not an individual who has these attributes and that capital takes: now he is an individual that capital produces. *Actually*, in all respects, that individual is a product and an attribute of capital, capital produced him for itself.

Javiera: What I have in doubt is "the formal" and "the real". The formal is a change of form, but the real?

JIC: "Formal" refers to the external: what it is that "externally" changed (so to speak; it is not). In the first case a form of relationship changed, and in the second case what that individual is, he was transformed and is a product of capital. So, it's not something that capital... I put it in these terms: when one starts with the production of absolute surplus value and capital appears (I am going to put it in very loose terms), capital is the subject of this production, but it is a "tricky" subject, which does not set its own conditions, it is determined by conditions that are external to it. When we advance in the production of relative surplus value, what appears is that it is not true that capital is that limited subject: it is the full subject, because everything that happens in the capitalist mode of production is the product of capital. And this is the difference between formal and real subsumption: from being a subject *"subject*" to all external determinations in this way, he becomes a subject who lays down all the conditions of his own existence.

[Ivan asks if formal subsumption is only in premature stages of the capitalist mode of production or if it continues to be in force and continues to be regenerated.]

[223] He changed places a few lines, he was confused when mentioning where everything was taking place.

Do you want me to go to the end of...? [Laughter.] The form is still the form of the capitalist relation, but now what there is is a real subsumption, which has a form, but which springs from the content (one can put it very crudely in these terms). In formal subsumption, the form provides the content, because it is external conditions that tell how the worker can be exploited. In real subsumption, forms are laid by content. This is presented externally, who puts whom, but it is this. Later some references will appear, because in Volume 3 there is some reference to the peasants... But it is not relevant to raise it.

[Alexander asks what conditionings we are referring to, if they are of the previous social form, of the Middle Ages.]

It is also somewhat premature because of something that will later become evident, and in fact the expression will appear not as *formal and real "subsumption*", but as "formal" and "real": how the form changed, what is the content that changed. When one looks at the unity of what appears later, one says: one is closing a development in which this proposal of real and formal subsumption had a role to play. Marx never makes explicit who it is that he is taking as a worker selling labor power when he first appears. He does not say: but this is the artisan of feudal society that we put here now to work. The examples that appear are of the comparison (in the chapter on simple cooperation) between the artisan who works alone and the one who is part of the collective worker.

And also at stake is this discussion of those who say that Marx does not consider that the capitalist mode of production... that there was an organization of social production based on the simple production of commodities, and when one looks at Marx's development, he does not say that it is a mode of production, but it is taking all the time... One can say that... Who is the commodity producer of the starting point? He is the free artisan and peasant from feudal society as if they were the whole of society. They did not exist like everything, but it is taken that way. Then, when he says that the development of the value-form is the development of the commodity form, one has again... The development of the value-form reaches capital, and is then born in the simple commodity, in its development. So, it is not absolutely explicit to say: "Let's start from this subject." Development starts with that subject, he goes on to say that the conditions of this subject is that he is separated from his means of production and his means of life, he is a free individual, who has the attributes that this producer of commodities had. And then, when he is set on how he works, he starts working under the conditions of a private and independent producer, except that he does not have full control over his individual work.

So, that development is present all the time, and when it is over it will reappear very strongly. To me, what seems to me to generate risks with respect to the fluidity of appropriating that development is precisely the degree of assimilation with a historical process, which does not have the simple characteristics that are appearing here. That one can say: it is the axis, the key to that historical process, and Marx in a moment is going to say that this is the concrete form that historical development has. I prefer an exposition that starts by putting on: this is the worker

who needs capital, I don't know where it comes from, which until now, as one has not seen him make any transformation in the materiality of work, he can assimilate himself with what the free artisan was.

The proposal of the need for subsistence and the "moral historical" component has given rise to a lot of very unhappy proposals, which abstract from the materiality of the labor process, which turn value into a thing that exists in the heads of individuals, etc. Because the question is, what is a subsistence? Subsistence has a determination, which is what the individual is doing. So, to pose it as an abstract condition of subsistence, for me is the way of saying that it is given, because if not, you have to say: well, the worker needs to consume the things that reproduce his labor power.

To be able to put it in a development in which that condition is not set as a starting point... And it is because in the historical condition the problem of what subsistence is. It appeared in the developments of classical economics: they talk all the time about the natural price of labor (for Ricardo, that is the subsistence wage, the subsistence of the working family). Now, that subsistence is associated with a certain technical condition. And to hold on so tightly, to that first is... It is even there as a historical process: first there is absolute surplus value, and then relative surplus value appears as a product of historical development, which has given rise to a series of proposals.

In Argentina it is present, very strongly synthesized in Mónica Peralta Ramos[224], saying: what happened from 1930 to 1970 in Argentina? There is a period of absolute surplus value production until 1950-60, and a period of relative surplus value production. And there is no such separation in historical developments, but it gives rise to those constructions that destroy the unity of content. It is not Marx's responsibility to allow other individuals to do what they think of with what is proposed, but objectively he has given rise to, let's say.

We have to see if the exposition that I am proposing is coherent, because one would be presupposing something that one then has to deploy. But even if it was more abstractly, not so much as a historical development, but this, when I look at it... I come from the simple production of commodities, which is the simplest form of social labor done privately and independently, its absolute form, and what I am doing is moving in a socialization of private labor. So, what follows from that is absolute surplus value, not as the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production, but as development. When I see absolute surplus value it is no longer the purity of social labor done privately: now there is a socialization of private labor within private labor. And then, why not state that this is the axis... It is said by Marx in a lot of places, but it is not placed as if it were the axis, when he makes references to the axis it is placed as a historical development.

Perhaps, after having developed the socialization of private labor to large-scale industry, one can say that now what is in front of you is this subject that we now see setting its own conditions. They are forms of exposure that have negative

[224] Sociologist who, curiously, is the aunt of Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo.

potentialities. Why do I look at the other? Perhaps because we have seen the things that can be built using the form of exposition that Marx takes, how it can be emptied of content to development, etc. It is clear to me that when I look at the determinations of value I say: we have to look at the materiality of work, because then we speak of the immaterial character of abstract labor, which is purely social, etc.; and, in view of that, one cannot do without this. Marx perhaps does it more strictly, he puts everything at the point where it appears in specific relation to the capitalist mode of production. So, work appears in general, when it comes to capitalist production.

I was going to make a point about the term "subsumption". In the translations prior to Siglo XXI, there is no word there, but "submission", "subordination", because in Spanish the word "subsumption" did not exist. He is not in the RAE[225]. The term "subordination," etc., does not have all the content that the word "subsumption" has. "Subdued" is closer, the word corresponds to something that is tucked inside, "subordinate" does not, there is an order in which one appears in front and another after, but instead "subsumption" refers specifically to something that is subsumed in another, that is inside the other. It is not an external relation, in which one exterior dominates another that is external, but one is operating as an organ of the other, in this case the worker is an organ of capital, what he is, he is because of capital.

[Ivan returns to the term "subsumption," which appears there in relation to the economic activity of the worker.]

Ivan: [...] and sometimes in the literature on value chains peasants and artisans appear as in the lowest links, as subsumed to the capitalist mode of production, but it is also a term that is associated with the active worker. But we can use it in general: we are subordinate to capital regardless of whether or not we have an active participation in the production of capital. That's what I thought, taking the development of the first chapters.

JIC: Later on, I think it appears, in the part of land rent, with the peasants – beyond the way Marx uses the term – that it may be that the individual is not formally subsumed in capital, because he is not a seller of labor power. And it appears that it is *really* subsumed because it is a product of capital, which produces it as a free producer of commodities as much as it produces the worker whose labor power it is going to use. That peasant is also a product of capital.

Again, this happens: it is a term that has a "general" meaning, where the sense is the difference that we are seeing so far between real and formal, or it can have an immediate concrete meaning in that formally... The individual is not a seller of labour-power, he is an independent producer of commodities, he is not subsumed by capital, but all the conditions under which he produces his life and commodities, the price at which he sells, etc., are not the conditions of an abstract independent producer of commodities: he does not sell them for their value. it sells them for a price that is determined by the concrete ways in which the price is determined in

[225] It refers to an old edition.

the capitalist mode of production. I could not answer now how much it makes sense... I have no doubt about the difference as a general content, as a general determination. In those cases... I would have to think about it. Today I would have some resistance to using the same term, but more than that I could not answer.

Iván: I also thought of it as meaning that even an unemployed person is subsumed in capitalist society.

JIC: That's another thing.

Ivan: A worker who is not recognized for the use value of his labor power, one can also think that he is subsumed to capital no longer as a productive organ that produces surplus value, but as an organ that capital considers surplus population, and in that sense he is subsumed in the capitalist relation.

JIC: So far there is no reason, the possibility has appeared that the worker becomes surplus for capital, but the concrete determinations that convert a mass of the working population into surplus have not been deployed. In any case, and moving forward, it is better that it is really subsumed to capital, it is not a problem of not being "formally" subsumed: once one is really subsumed, whether or not one is selling one's labor power does not change that subsumption. The cartonero, formally is not a seller of labor power, he is really subsumed in capital (besides, he valorizes it). Therefore, the use of those terms to refer to this specific determination makes me even more doubtful. It is an attribute of capital, which produces it in this condition. So, I don't know if it is appropriate or not to use it, but of course it is subsumed in the full sense of the term. That is why I doubt whether this full meaning is not emptied of content, if it is reduced to the fact that if it is not actively selling its labor power, it is not subsumed in capital.

Javiera: [...] How can one be inside something "formally", only in formal terms?

JIC: I don't want to go to the part that goes further, but... If you look at the difference between a slave and a worker, what has already appeared here, in part, is that the difference is the way they are forced to work. One because he had a relationship of personal dependence, the other because he is doubly free. Now, if I look at them, the difference is not simply formal: the productive attributes that one has are absolutely different from those that the other has. The historical powers of which each one is the bearer are totally different. So, *really*, they are different. The key to what changed from one to the other, is what changed formally or actually? In that sense is the use of the term. If I want to explain it because the form of submission changed, what remains for me is that the powers of the worker to overcome the condition of forced laborer are the same as those of the slave, I simply stayed with that condition. This is what appears in a lot of proposals such as Holloway's with the shout: what has changed is the way of shouting and the powers that you have do not play any role in this.

In reality, the term "real", "realization", has its problem because it comes from idealistic conceptions. Because it is not that something is realized: what it can do is transform the form it has. And one says: "this determination/potency is realized...",

and what he is saying is that it ceased to be a power, of existing as a potency actually, to be an actuality: he is not saying that it did not exist and that now it has reality. But well, they are the problems of language, which comes with its historical development, and it is still used in that sense. And here is another aspect of the term "real", which is not "existing", but refers to what happened to the content in one situation and the other. In one case it appears that the form has changed but the content is the same, and in the other the content is not the same. [...][226].

[Edgardo mentions that in *Subsumción real del consumo al capital*, by Jorge Veraza, the author mentions that the term comes from Latin and that Marx used it that way in *Capital* and not in German. JIC mentions how around the time of the 1970s many translations appeared where all this "economic-social" stuff, etc., appeared, with the aim – according to them – of opposing the classic "mechanistic" reading of Marx's writings. He also talks about a draft of a writing by Marx that Siglo XXI published as "unpublished chapter VI" of *Capital*, where Marx develops real and formal subsumption, and they said that Marx had not included it in *Capital* afterwards, but it is much more developed in the work than in that draft. Then, the discussion appears and the term begins to be used.]

We are missing something that had to do with the historical character of... if they are separate stages of production. What is Marx going to propose, when there is relative surplus value? Only when there is a change in the technical conditions that allow the productivity of capital to increase. That is: once that change is made, that surplus value is no longer relative, but absolute. And he says that there are only two moments left in which what is going to appear as... what is left as relative surplus value? Every time it makes the revolution or when it takes an industry where there was only that production formally subsumed in capital and changes the base, originating a base, so to speak, properly capitalist. Relative surplus value springs up and disappears as relative surplus value, it is incorporated as a normal condition of difference between the value of labor power and the length of the day; then, it is a permanent regeneration of relative surplus value every time the necessary labor is reduced and the surplus labor increases. But when this became normal, it is no longer a change in the composition of the working day, now it is the normal working day, which is going to be subjected to a new change, and at that moment there will be relative surplus value.

And here it will appear that all commodities already appear in the movement of circulation as the product of capital, of a production that is subsumed in capital. And capital appropriates the productive forces of labor not only through the technical transformation it makes, but insofar as this technical transformation is sustained by the appropriation of the productive forces that nature gives to labor, which will also appear as the productive forces of capital. Both human beings and nature will be transformed into a product of capital for capital itself.

Alejandro: Can that be a concrete determination of why for economists it appears that those moments in which both capital is put into machinery in production, and nature appears to them as capital in itself?

[226] Salto asks Iván about the edition where the term comes from and the debates about it and the subsequent discussion about translations.

JIC: The mediations are more complex. Actually, we saw that today in the workshop of Volume 3 [Laughter]. There is a whole mediation that, at this point, does not even appear through the covers. But with this real subsumption we have that the unity of the human life process has the form of a process for capital. This capital is dead labor, it has an objectified existence in the machinery, which confronts the worker as the bearer of productive powers that belong to the worker, but that confront him as an attribute of the machinery. It is a development of the productive forces of labor, the only subject of production is the human being, but these powers do not seem to spring from living labor itself, but seem to have been given to living labor by machinery, and machinery in turn appears as if by nature it had the form of capital. So in effect, all the productive forces of labor that are being developed are presented inverted as if they were springing from the machinery that by nature is capital. It was developed in the previous chapter how all the productive forces are presented as if they were not of work, the worker appears to lose his condition as the subject of the material process of work, and these attributes appear placed in the machine.

[II]

Randy: I hadn't been clear about the formality, the content, the potential... and a certain question of temporality in the sense that you were saying, we should not think of the first as the formal and then the real subsumption.

Aristides: In several situations in development the question of content and form has already appeared, and here when "the formal" appears as a term it seems to speak to us of the same thing, but it is not exactly this question of the deployment of form and content. I wanted to ask about that again.

JIC: I'm going to repeat myself, but... This differentiation appears as a synthesis of the point at which progress was made. The historical movement first has a diversity of concrete forms, and a movement that is not sequential in character. Because the capitalist mode of production, in its historical origin and advanced in its historical development, develops taking forms that in some cases play more or less central roles at the time, which do not imply formal subsumption in the sense that it is not a wage relation, but the individual is under the "domination" of capital. This thing of slave labor, forced labor of the native populations of America, all of this does not fit under the category of formal or real subsumption in the sense in which we are looking at it.

For me, the axis is: when one looks at the emergence of the doubly free worker, what has changed is the way in which the direct producer is subjected to the condition of a forced worker (and here there appeared, but not all, of the worker's condition as a forced worker), in which he organizes his work and is forced to work. But then, the form that changes is that of the wage worker, the way of being subjected changed: one was a forced serf in the form of relations of personal dependence, the other is a forced worker because of his condition as a doubly free individual. Up to that point, one did not see, beyond the form, what happened to

the determinations of what that worker is and what happens in the materiality of the labor process.

If I want to know this condition, when I look at the movement, I have to see how the doubly free worker organizes his labor process, and the first thing I see is that he works under the command of the capitalist and that by the form of his social relation he is subject to that domination. From this point of view, if I want to compare him with the servant, I have no other measure than that one has ties of personal dependence and the other this condition of doubly free. If I want to ask myself what it means to be subjected to capital because one is a doubly free individual, I start from the simply free individual, from the independent producer of commodities, and I have to see what difference this worker has with respect to the organization of his work with respect to the free individual. When this aspect appears, the conditions of reproduction of labor power, the conditions in which one works, except for the fact that, since one is not a free individual, but formally, doubly free, this is all that is before me. Those conditions formally changed, but I don't know what the essence of their change is.

When I begin to look at relative surplus value, what appears to me is that, if I could look at an individual work, now I cannot: now I have to look at a work of a collective character; that if I saw manual work, now I have to look at collective work done with machinery; that if I looked at an individual who produced a commodity, Now I have an individual who, because he is doubly free, cannot produce commodities because he has become surplus. Where do all these determinations come from? They do not spring from the fact that formally he ceased to be a slave and is now a doubly free worker. It *really changed* his determination, because now all the conditions of his labor, of what it is, spring from the capitalist character of production. If I looked at him against the merely free individual, I could see that, even with respect to him, the only thing that had changed was the way he worked: from being free, he now works under the command of the capitalist. When I look at relative surplus value, I no longer have the independent producer of production, nothing that happens in the production of relative surplus value can be done by a commodity producer.

So, beyond the form, the change I have in the determinations of this subject is that this subject is a product of capital. And with relative surplus value, what will appear to me is that capital is the product of itself. Something that when I looked at absolute surplus value, from the outset there was something that set the thing in motion, and it started again identical to what it was at the moment it started, not put in place by capital itself. Every time it starts up again with relative surplus value, it is the result of what capital did by transforming the material conditions of production in the previous cycle.

So, this is the difference there is. I can say that the appearance of the wage-worker is a condition for the development of capital and therefore for the development of relative surplus value. But to separate it as historical periods from saying: up to here there was absolute surplus value and from here there is relative surplus value, is what I say that lends itself to looking at processes in which the content of what happens has nothing to do with whether in one era there was

absolute surplus value and in another pRel; Because in fact, when one looks at it, from the very birth of capital, historically, there is production of relative surplus value, it is not that it begins to take place at a certain moment.

The capitalist as such does not begin by having an independent producer of commodities which he took and now made his only wage-labourer. When capitalist production begins, it begins with collective workers. [...] There are times when there are leaps in that development. Now, it appears as a "classical" historical separation that there is a period of manufacturing and another of the Industrial Revolution. And now, more than 125 years after that Revolution, there is a boom in the division of manufacturing labor, an explosion through the development of the manual assembly line. So, we cannot simply talk about there being a manufacturing period, because the machines also came from before the capitalist mode of production. And the capitalist mode of production takes these machines and transforms them, precisely, in order to produce relative surplus value.

So, for me, the role played by differentiation is that one discovers that from something that seems to be simply a difference of a formal nature... Taking it with respect to the simple commodity producer, it is a formal change, which did not modify his conditions of production, except that he no longer has full control over his individual labor even though he is a free individual, because he works under the control of the capitalist. And what flows from this is what is the content of that movement, what the capitalist mode of production really comes to do. It is not that he ceased to be a worker forced by bonds of personal dependence or an abstractly free individual and is now a wage worker: that is the form, the first thing one sees when confronted with the simplest determinations of the capitalist mode of production. But when these simpler determinations unfold, what appears is that it is not simply that change, that here there is a radical change in the process of human life, of production, where everything is the product of capital, responding to the purpose of the movement of capital, which is to valorize and multiply itself.

So, that difference. I just kept a text by Hegel that I was looking at for something else... [...] It is the chapter where he is going to advance on the question of form and content, which for me is where Marx may have gotten this from. First he speaks of the absolute foundation (hence the question of form and content), but the whole structure, the chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic* , all have three parts. And the three parts, when divided, have three parts. Because it is what it seems in Hegel's construction as the thesis, the antithesis and the synthesis (it is not exactly that). But here, what are the three parts of the determined foundation called? The first is the formal foundation, which is the one that stops at the forms. And the note in this text (the notes are one of the richest things in Hegel's development, which are not footnotes because they are very long, they are interspersed in the text), is called "Formal Way of Explaining on Tautological Foundations". Because what is the formal foundation? It stops at the exterior... Again, what I said last time: for Hegel this is the way in which thought develops. So it is that first thought, it is not that it stops at form, but that it develops as a formal thought that can only link things by their exteriority.

Point (b) is called "The Real Foundation". And he refers again to the fact that the first was a formal way of explaining on tautological foundations, because in exteriority the only thing there are are forms that cannot transcend oneself, everything that one faces is always present, nothing can have been developed. The problem is that when you looked at it for the first time you didn't see what was developing, but what was developing is the same as what was already in the initial, formal foundation. And the note in point b) is called: "The formal way of explaining based on foundations other than what is founded". And this is the real foundation. And when he finishes and synthesizes this development, he is the integral foundation: he is the one on which the real foundation places the need for the formal foundation. The formal foundation is the immediate form, the real one is the content, and the integral one is why the content has the form it has. […].

So, this is for me the meaning of why Marx uses formal and real subsumption, it refers to that structure that Hegel gives to the thing, only here it is the other way around: I put what changed about the form, and now I see how the content changes. And in a way, the section that follows from the reproduction is the unity of that which changed form, springing from the movement of the content. What is going to appear is that he is a doubly free worker. When I started, the only thing I had was the *form* of the doubly free worker: now I am going to have what it means to be a doubly free worker, what is the life of this worker. Before, it was that capital produces surplus value; now, that surplus value produces capital, that this is the capitalist mode of production. When I started it had the form, which is an amount of money that is put to work and produces surplus value, and when I see the content, what I see is that this is a unit that produces itself, it is not a starting point different from the result, that at most the result is incorporated into the starting point, but in fact the result is the one that sets its own starting point.

For me, it is not reduced to a historical movement, and relating it to a historical movement has the problem that then the historical movement encloses the other, that one is saying that in this historical period this did not exist... but it existed fully; So why am I going to exclude it? "Fully," what does it mean? Primitively, because it is still a form that can only be expressed in its development, but the need for the capitalist to advance in the productivity of the labor of his workers was already present in the nineteenth century, before the Industrial Revolution. All the machinery that appears in the Industrial Revolution has antecedents. Marx when he talks about the production of relative surplus value he is talking about how machinery was transformed, it did not sprout from nothing, it is that what existed previously has the germ of what developed later, it is not a linear movement. That is my view on the matter.

I say again something I said last time: when in Chapter IV the determination of the value of labour-power is explained, on the basis of not wanting to enter into the movement of capital itself, and then it is explained by a subsistence wage and a factor of a historical or moral character... There is no explanation of what wages are in the capitalist mode of production, that is explained in the chapters that follow. To the point that there are those who maintain – it is one of the waves that we have now – that Marx never wrote the chapter on wage labor, where it would be necessary to explain what the "moral component" is. And Marx has the full

explanation of what a use-value is for the worker. So far it is only that it has to consume use values that reproduce its labor power, but what is a use value of that is going to be deployed in the movement that follows. And then, to hold very strictly to the fact that no determination has been deployed that can account for that, at the same time, for those who see it as a development in which there is something that is already given, placed in one way, and then there is another stage... It lends itself to these readings that destroy the unity of development.

Alexander: This explanation you gave regarding what Hegel develops in the *Science of Logic* reminds me of the explanation given by Marx in the *Contribution* regarding the method of political economy precisely. I don't remember if it was in the first or the second stage, that he is confronted with forms, he finds the relations between those forms, but then he advances to a content, which he finds, but then he does not ask himself why the content is presented under the form.

JIC: That's right. It is the same thing that he raises in Chapter I of Volume 1 when he refers to classical political economy and names Smith and Ricardo, who can discover the substance of value but can never answer why that substance takes the form it does. Only for Hegel, I say again, it is turned upside down. Because it is not that he says: this is the process in which we face this concrete and we get to know it, but it is the way in which we *engender* the concept of this. And then somewhere he says—I think it's in this part of the form and the content—: why don't you advance to this point? And his answer is: because there is an immaturity of thought, and when he matures he will realize that he has to advance to this point. In the meantime, he stops at the apparent foundations.

And for me, I have always read the *Science of Logic* turned upside down: I am looking at this simpler determination, and what I have to look at is to accompany it in the unfolding of its movement. And when it appears that the answer remains in the form and then when the thought matures beyond, I say: it is not that one has even constructed the form, there is a *need for* the subject to stop at the form or in the content separated from the form and not answer himself because of the need for that content to have that form. But I have always been very rich in Hegel's development of the *Science of Logic*. I always saw it as a development of the method of knowledge, not as a "begetting" of anything.

[Edgardo says that he sees that Marx does not speak of real and formal subsumption as a historical development, that manufacturing and large-scale industry coexisted.]

JIC: Yes. I can look at it as the history of that development, but in my understanding what is relevant is what it shows of all aspects of the transformation of the materiality of labor under the capitalist mode of production. And then, if that is the historical sequence or not... There are conditions for there to be historical sequence in these movements, but I return to this. Marx proposes, in the transition from the chapter of manufacture to that of machinery, the reduction of all movement to a simple movement in manufacturing, and that is what becomes a mechanical movement incorporated into the instrument of production. The manual assembly line... One can say that the movement is the other way around:

from seeing the simplified mechanical movements, the possibility arises of converting a collective worker who makes simplified mechanical movements and putting it to work. To what extent is the division of labor on the manual assembly line not the product of machinery development? In turn, robotization, it is clear that it is the product of the development of the manual assembly line, of making that general movement of converting those simple mechanical movements into attributes of a machine.

So, one can look at it as historical processes, because something called the "Industrial Revolution" appears where a leap in the development of machinery appears, but what matters when it is making the deployment is: this goes from the simplest form of work in the capitalist mode of production to the most complex form, more developed than work in the capitalist mode of production, to which two things changed: it was individual work, and it is necessarily collective work; it was manual work (sorry because this is not in *Capital*) and the materiality of the work changed, the tool left the hands of the worker and became part of the machine, the worker's work became what we have seen so far in being an appendage of the machine. And who does the development of science to be able to take the tool out of the hands of the worker and turn it into this automatic mechanism? Then, the materiality of that work changed, now it appears as central in the development of production processes... Marx does make the reference that in order to be a productive laborer it is no longer necessary to be in immediate contact with the production process. Now it is the collective worker who works all together, and it may be that the worker does not touch the tool and yet participates, he is a productive laborer integrated into the production process. That is the axis of development and for me it is the essential thing: what is being shown to be happening in this way of organizing social life, what role it plays in the historical development of humanity.

Chapter XV. Change of magnitudes in the price[227] of labor power and in surplus value.

Let's go to this chapter that I was telling you that, precisely, if in these chapters, a content was sprouting that takes a form different from itself, in this chapter what there is is a process of an analytical nature, not to accompany a development. Every now and then within that analytical process appears: well, but then this encloses this movement, takes this concrete form and determines what we used to see and now we have the reason why it develops like this. But it is also an analytical chapter of relationships between magnitudes, and therefore, what one has are quantitative relationships. And it is an analysis that revolves around what the change in quantitative relations says, and it is somewhat long in this sense. The structure is of a development that, contrary to what we have been doing, has a strong character of logical structuring, which is done to appropriate the determinations of the magnitudes and the relationships between the different magnitudes. So, it starts by putting what qualitative determinations the magnitude

[227] Juan later corrects him, because what Marx is looking at is the value, not the price of labor power.

is going to look at, and there are going to be three. But first, the relationship he is going to make is what happens to the value of labor power and surplus value. What he will always have in front of him is that surplus value does not determine the value of labor power but the other way around, but playing with this determination.

1) The first is the duration of the working day, which he goes on to say that "it is the same as the extensive magnitude of work" (and he also owes that to Hegel, who speaks of an extensive magnitude and an intensive magnitude).

2) Of the normal intensity of work, he says that it is the intensive magnitude of work, how work is condensed into a certain amount of time.

3) The third is the productive power of labor or productivity of labor, because the same quantity of labor, with the same intensity and duration, can yield different quantities of product/time.

So, everything is quantitative relations. And in this development of the movement that presents itself as a simple quantitative change, one must distinguish things that can intervene, that do not simply or immediately correspond to what one is looking at, but come from another source. And so, the first thing you're going to look at in this regard, is... because in the 3 determinations that were there (duration, intensity, productivity) the value of labor power did not appear. So you have to look at what happens to the value of labor power, and it is going to say that it is determined by the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the reproduction of that labor power in average conditions. The material content of that mass of livelihoods may change, although he says that he will take it as a given factor; both can change, but it is going to bring into play the changes in the value of that mass of use values, it is going to dispense with changes in the content, in the character of those use values, it is going to leave it fixed.

To me there is a question that has given rise, for the discussions in Volume 3 on the transformation of values into prices of production, to the assertion that Marx says that the means of subsistence of the workers are given at a certain moment, and then it is an independent element of the change in value of those means of life. And what one has in front of one (this is not to advance, but to make it clear why I put it now) when one is going to analyze the process in which value takes the form of prices of production, plays essentially in that movement, which insofar as the price of production differs quantitatively from value, It affects what usage values are consumed. If a commodity becomes cheaper, its consumption will increase, and if it becomes more expensive, it will decrease – as a general determination. And that therefore, the materiality of the unit of social production and consumption will change if the commodities, each of them, are not sold simply for what we know so far – proportions of abstract socially necessary labour materialised privately and independently in it – but are to be changed on the basis of another proportionality.

That now, before finishing this section, the reference to the question will appear, although there will be no development, that what we have seen so far is kicked with what everyone knows, but we cannot answer it here but later. So, we're going to take what Marx is taking, but with this caveat. And he is going to put it more externally when he is going to refer [in Volume 3] to the fact that in competition, both in the domestic market and in the world market, "it is the given and assumed magnitudes of wages, interest and ground rent" (which has not appeared to us so far, we are talking about labor power and surplus value) "that enter into the calculation as constant and regulating magnitudes."[228] So, this thing is going to appear that one has to put aside [...].

What happens in any analytical process of relationship between magnitudes? There are 3 "factors" (it is totally external), and to analyze one, we look at how it varies leaving the other two fixed. Then you have to take one of the ones that was previously fixed and analyze it in its variability, leaving the other two fixed... Until each one was looked at as variable while the other two are fixed, and finally [you look] at what happens when the 3 vary together. And second, what he proposes is: each of these 3 factors can vary in different magnitudes, but also in different senses: it can increase or decrease, and it can do so to a greater or lesser extent, and each of these cases will have different effects on the result: what will happen to the value of labor power and consequently to the rate of surplus value.

A. The Length of the Working Day and the Intensity of Labour Constant; the Productivity of Labour Variable

The first thing that is going to be looked at as an independent variable is the productive force of the work, leaving the duration of the day and the intensity of the work constant. If the productivity of labor changes, at the same time with the same intensity a different mass of products is produced, and consequently, the value — Marx puts it as the price, but it is the value — of each unit of commodities will change. If the productivity of labor doubled, the value of each commodity will be reduced by half, if productivity fell by half, the other way around. But what one has to take into account is that since the working day is given, the mass of value is the same as before, only distributed in a greater or lesser number of units.

What follows, then, is how this change in the productivity of labor is going to be reflected in the value of labor power. Given the other two conditions that are present, the value of labor power can only decrease, and with a given day and intensity, increase surplus value, if the productivity of labor increases. No element with these conditions can increase the surplus value. And there will be the clarification that the movements of surplus value are a consequence (never a cause) of the opposing movement of the value of labor power. To put it in terms of mathematical relations: the independent variable is the value of labor power, the dependent variable is surplus value. So, the movement that exists here with these conditions is an opposing movement. But in the external quantitative relation,

[228] Marx, K. (1965: 807), *Capital*, Volume 3. Mexico: FCE.

where the causality of motion is not present, it appears simply as if one goes up and the other goes down, one goes down and the other goes up, and we lose sight of who is the independent variable and who is the dependent variable. Every change in the magnitude of one implies a change in the magnitude of the other, which no longer appear as relative changes, but as absolute changes: this changed, this changed. Marx then remarks that what underlies this is always that the independent variable, although it is not manifested in this relationship, is the change in the value of labor power.

How does the change in labor productivity affect the value of labor power? It cheapens the means of livelihood for the workers. He again points out that the mass of these means of subsistence does not change. [...] What Marx is going to point out here is that he said in the analysis that the mass does not change, but the mass of both the means of subsistence for the workers and the mass of use-values that carry surplus value can change, without changing the price of labor power and without changing surplus value in its absolute magnitude.

That is: we are going to put that the productive power of labor that produces the means of subsistence for the workers is doubled. The value of labor power should fall by half with the same mass. But it may happen, he says, "analytically"—that if the value of each unit is halved, the labourer receives twice as much means of subsistence as he received before, and the price of his labour-power appears unchanged. The proportion of the working day paid to the worker appears to be the same as before. But this, having mediated a change in the productivity of labor that produces means of subsistence for the workers, means that the mass of use-values that the working family can consume has doubled. So, we have this caveat: one can be looking at a non-movement of the price of labor power, one sees that there is a movement in the productivity of labor that produces its means of subsistence and that the value of that labor power should decrease, the value of that labor power did not change, so — let's take them in simple terms — the mass of use values that the worker is receiving in exchange increased of its labor force.

Later on we are going to look at the extent to which this occurs in the historical development of the capitalist mode of production, because there is a whole phase in which this plays a role, at least in what can be roughly measured on the basis of statistics that refer to concrete forms — which is not the value of labor power, nor surplus value, etc.—, but which one can use *with many caveats* as indicators, one is going to see a phenomenon of this nature. But this is one of the elements that precisely, if the mass of use-values were left alone, this cannot happen. But here comes the point at which it must be explained that it may happen that this mass has not remained still. With this caveat, what one has is that the movement of the value of labour-power can continually decrease in relation to the continuous increase in the productivity of labour.

When Marx is advancing with this, there is something that goes beyond what he is developing, the problem he is looking at, because what we have been accompanying so far is the determination of capital, which already presents us with a contradiction in what we have been seeing, which is: capital is a mass of value that, When we look at it in circulation, it engenders more value in relation to

its total magnitude, and this is measured by the rate of profit. But when we look at how capital produces itself, we saw that there is a part of capital which is dead, constant capital, which is not capable of valorization, and that only the relation of valorizing capital itself is an attribute of capital put into the purchase of labour-power, of variable capital. But here Marx is going to make a reference to the expression of surplus value with different rates of profit, that the same rate of surplus value is reflected in different rates of profit, and different rates of surplus value can yield the same rate of profit. And that when one is looking at these movements, one is looking at them in relation to capital as variable capital, which is the part that is capable of valorization, but one must also take into account that there are movements in relation to capital in its condition, as it is presented in circulation, of being a mass of value that is valorized. This is what I mark as the axis of the point at which the change in labor productivity is developing, and what follows is the change in labor intensity.

B. Working hours, constant; productive force of labor, constant; Labor intensity, variable

What about increased work intensity? As the productivity of labor did not change, only the intensity, in a given day of work more work will be expended, which will be materialized in more units, but in each unit, as the productive technique in it, the same amount of work will have been expended. And then, he is going to propose that if the working day remains the same – and we have as a starting point that it is – a more intensive working day yields a greater mass of value. And he says: if the value of money does not change, that will be expressed in a greater mass of money.

The contrast with the intensity and productivity of labor is that in the case of the change in the productivity of labor, in a certain day in a certain time, more units are produced but the same mass of value is produced, and in each unit there is a smaller mass of value. But in the change of the intensity of labour, a greater mass of product and value is produced in the same day, but the value of each unit is the same as when the labour was done with less intensity. And this greater quantity of value appears materialized in a greater quantity of money.

What happened to the price[229] of labor power and surplus value? What may happen is that the price of labour-power increases in the same or different proportion according to the increase in intensity, and that surplus-value increases. Because now there is a greater mass of value, also a greater expenditure of labor power. Consequently, the share of paid and unpaid labor that the worker performs increased. If the paid part increased, the price of labor power will have to rise proportionately, and as the unpaid part has increased in parallel, the surplus value will rise. And what Marx is going to develop is that it can happen that this increase in the price of labor power entails a decrease in the value of labor power, the payment of labor power below value. For it may be that the intensity of labour has increased in *such proportion*, and on the other hand the price of labour power has

[229] He apologizes because he constantly says "the value" but in the text the price appears.

risen in an *insufficient proportion* to compensate for this accelerated wear and tear.

Alejandro: [...] And if the mass of surplus-value and the price of labour-power increase in the same proportion, does the rate of surplus-value remain the same?

JIC: Indeed. But the value of labor power by increasing intensity may have... The consumption of additional usage values that this requires may be in non-direct proportion to the increase in intensity. I take it in this sense to try to give a very rough example: the worker needs housing. The increase in labour intensity may not be reflected in the increase in the value of labour power in terms of the need for housing, which remains the same whether it works more or less intensively. It does have to be reflected inevitably, in order to maintain the value of labor power, that the individual needs to consume more immediate use values because he has worn out more, he needs to eat more, and it may be that those additional foods are proportionally much greater than the normal ones that he had to consume up to that point. And it may happen that he needs to consume use-values which, until this increase in the intensity of labour, did not enter into his consumption, and now become a condition for the reproduction of that labour-power[230].

When we finish this section, I propose that we look at the question of method and what transformations there are in the materiality of labor that go beyond what appears in *Capital*, and consequently what transformations there are in what a worker is, what a capitalist is, and what capital is.

Alejandro: Are there ways to objectively measure the intensity of work?

JIC: It depends on what form the increase in intensity takes and what form the work has. There would be a measure if the individual were connected to a device capable of measuring the energy expenditure he is making. That would be a way of measuring how much it varies. There is an indirect way of looking at it, is that if it produced 10 units and now produces 12, one has to assume that the intensity of the work increased by 20%. But they are all relative measurements. Because there can be ways to increase the intensity of work... I am going to take a form that makes this work that I am doing: the intensity of the work in teaching, a course of 20 students or 40 students entails an increase in the intensity of the work marked, it is not duplicated but it is clear that it has an increase. Now: you can't measure it in a way... unless you measured the energy consumption expenditure that person is making. Then, forms of work appear where intensity has different characteristics.

I'm going to complicate my life, but you have to consider that when Marx is putting this thing that it takes the same time to produce each unit because the productivity of labor has not changed, what appears is how you can increase the intensity of labor without changing productivity. Because one of the ways to increase the intensity of work is to increase the speed with which you work, and this increase implies that each unit takes less. That is the thing: the same is spent because the individual is more intensely applying his labor power, but when one

[230] I can think of, for example, use values that can be used to prevent or treat injuries: pharmaceutical products, the gym voucher, expenses for physiotherapists and psychiatrists...

looks at it, it is very difficult to say: here the problem is that the productivity or the intensity of this work has changed. The individual works faster, which implies a condensed expenditure of labor power. But there is another aspect of the increase in labor intensity, which is the downtime, the pores in the production process. And one of the sources of increased work intensity is the elimination of downtime. That does not mean that the individual now works faster and spends more work in less time in each unit, but that he produces more units because before there was an expenditure of labor power that was lost from the point of view of production, or there was no such expenditure.

This question arises: let's assume that on the manual assembly line, the individual is waiting for the part on which he has to work to arrive. During that time, some labor power is consuming, because the mere fact of being alive implies wear and tear. But if the individual instead of waiting has to work, he will not only have spent what he spent anyway, but more. Then, a series of movements appear that later looked at in concrete processes it is not so easy to separate if what there is is that the individual is spending his labor power intensely in each unit he produces and therefore spends more labor power in the day, or if he is spending more labor power because he has less dead time (in which he would be spending some labor power but not in the fullness in which it has to apply it to production).

So, when one wants to make the concrete measurement of all these issues, more or less great complexities appear. Many times, from the point of view of capital, which is the one that measures them, it does not matter what it is, what matters is the result. So, one of the tasks that appears with the development of the manual assembly line, which is to take methods and times, is how to make the work as intense as possible, on the double way that the individual for each piece takes less time because it makes an intensive expense, but also so that there is no downtime. And one of the key movements of the manual assembly line is that the individual repeats the same movement as simplified as possible and as close as possible all the time to it being applied to the work object, that the individual does not have to leave the line (to put something absurd) to go get the material that he has to process and then have to return, wasting time. All these issues lead to changes in the intensity of work.

Alejandro: Is the advance in the elimination of the pores of the day an advance in intensity or also in productivity?

JIC: In principle, if it is pure savings in the pore, it is an advance in intensity. What happens is that many times, to avoid the pore, you have to change the production technique, and there can be an increase... That is why it is difficult to look at the specific cases and distinguish them. In general, we will see that the increase in the intensity of work is strongly sustained by changes in production technique.

What will appear is that the change in the productivity of labor has an effect on the value of labor power, as long as that change occurs in the branches that directly or indirectly produce means of subsistence for the workers. On the other hand, when the intensity of labor changes—and here the length of the day will be

added—since there is a greater amount of labor applied, there is a greater amount of value produced, and it does not matter in which branch of production it occurred, there is more surplus value in total. In the case of increased productivity, there is never more value, but the same value distributed in more units, so the value of labor power decreased. In the case of intensity, and this is projected in the length of the day, there is more work, more value and more surplus value.

We have that when the change in the productivity of labor affects the value of the means of subsistence of the workers, in all branches of social production the rate of surplus value changes. When does the change in the intensity of labor have a general character of an increase in the rate of surplus value? When this change does not occur in a particular branch but is of a general character, when it becomes the normal intensity of expenditure of labour-power, and enters as the normal condition of the production of value. It does not appear as something that spread: if it is generalized, this is the normal condition, that this quantity of labor is expended and this number of units is produced in comparison with the previous condition in all branches of social production.

And here something is going to appear that will later reappear: what happens with the intensity of the work comparing different national spaces. Here it is taken that in all these spaces they work with the same productivity. And what is going to appear is that where the work is more intense, it is going to materialize in a monetary sum of value, in a higher sum of money than the less intense working day of another country. If two countries have the same productivity of labor, the length of the day is the same, but in one the intensity is greater, in that country the mass of value will be greater than in the other.

C. The Productivity and Intensity of Labour Constant; the Length of the Working Day Variable

Under these conditions, a reduction in the working day without changing the price of labour power does not change the necessary labour time, what it does do is reduce surplus labour and therefore surplus value. The next alternative is that the working day is prolonged while the price of labour power remains fixed, and consequently the quantity of surplus labour and surplus value increase absolutely and relatively. But if this prolongation occurs while the price of labor power is maintained, what is happening is that labor power is being paid below its value. And this is another: that since the working day has now been extended and there is a greater mass of use-values produced, it may happen that the price of labour-power will rise and surplus-value will increase at the same time, whether or not in the same proportion.

Here is an analysis of what the increase in the working day implies with respect to the wear and tear of the workforce. It is an attrition that is not proportional, but becomes more and more intense, and consequently, in order to sustain that labor power functioning in a longer day, the value of that labor power increases more than proportionally. And this is the case of overtime, in which a certain degree of

prolongation of the working day... In practice, the labor agreement, at least in Argentina, recognizes that there is a 50% increase in wear and tear in this part (later we will see how the price of labor power appears), and that more hours must be compensated with the doubling of the price paid in relation to normal work. All this is mediated by the fact that what is paid is the value of labor power and appears as the price of labor. The same happens with jobs in which the working day is shorter because it is recognized that there is an intensity of work that cannot be sustained in the general working day. We are going to see the two aspects in what follows now, when two begin to vary together and one stays still, and then if all three move together.

[...]

D. Simultaneous variations in the duration, productive power, and intensity of labor

Here it is important to emphasize, from what Marx is going to propose, that if the analysis were to stop here – because it seems that it is simply looking combined, together, and it would be a formality to continue developing – if one were to remain in these isolated movements, what would appear to one is the possibility of converting development, by cutting it off, into an ideological appearance that is used by the apologists of capital. Because up to this point the length of the working day has been separated, against the increase in the productivity of labor and the increase in the intensity of labor. And what is going to appear in development now is the central role played in the movement of the production of relative surplus value, an increase in the intensity of labour such that it can only be sustained in a shorter working day. And the ideological content is that then, someone can present the shortening of the working day as something that capital gives to the worker because he is generous, and in reality it is sustained by the increase in the intensity of work. And Marx is going to make this reference to the arguments used by the apologists of capital against the length of the day, who forget how this shortening is determined by the increase in the intensity of labor.

Marx is going to go back to taking the movements of these three variables, and he is going to consider first:

1) Productivity↓↓ — Working day↑↑[231].

So, what is going to appear here is that if the working day is extended, there is a greater mass of objectified value in the total of the commodities, but if productivity falls, it may be that the number of units is smaller. Then it may happen that the total mass of surplus-value remains still, but proportionately it is now a smaller part of the total value produced, or it may be that the proportion of total value remains the same, but its absolute magnitude has increased. And it depends on how long the working day is that one movement or the other can occur.

[231] Decreases or shortenings = "↓↓"; Increases or extensions = "↑↑".

And now comes the development of what is the key to the historical development of the production of relative surplus value through the system of machinery:

2) Intensity↑↑ — Productivity↑↑ — Working day↓↓.

The increase in intensity and productivity causes the material mass of product to be produced in the same time to multiply, and consequently both diminish the part of the day which the labourer has to work for himself. And here an analysis of the "absolute" determination of the reduction of the working day will appear. And that absolute diminution, in abstract terms, is that the working day encompasses only necessary labor. But it will make a relationship with a higher form of organization of social life, which has transcended the capitalist mode of production. And what is going to appear is that, on the one hand, the worker would have better living conditions, greater demands, and because it would be necessary to incorporate into the necessary work the portion of surplus labor that the social fund is generating in order to have reserves in the face of circumstances and expand social production. And what it is going to propose is that the greater the productivity, the shorter the working day can be and the more the intensity of work can grow.

Until now, [...] the capitalist mode of production appeared as a way of organizing social life that had no limits to the increase in the intensity of work. Now this limit appears that this increase cannot be maintained indefinitely. The other aspect that is going to appear is: then how do you increase the productivity of labor? By economizing labor, which not only includes the economy in the use of the means of production — less total labor is required than the labor necessary to produce a commodity — but also what we are talking about is the elimination of useless expenditure of labor power from the point of view of production. Then, the contradiction arises in which, on the other hand, the capitalist mode of production, with its anarchic way of establishing the unity between social production and consumption, of organizing production, wastes social labor everywhere: it wastes labor power, it has unproductive jobs – which are inherent in the capitalist mode of production and would not be necessary in other forms of organizing production. It then multiplies the tasks that the worker has to do so that there is no useless work, and at the same time it wastes productive forces of labor by its own character.

And here comes a reference in which we have to stop and ask ourselves. He is going to state that, with a given degree of intensity and productivity of labor, the labor time necessary "for material production" will be shorter, and on the other hand, the part of time where he says that it will be possible to dedicate to "the free spiritual and social activity of individuals" will be longer[232]. And he says [paraphrasing the quote]: the more the total labour power of society is distributed among the various individual members of society, the less part of them are excluded from participating in the process of production. And that in the capitalist

[232] Marx, K. (1977: 443), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

mode of production, if there is a class that has free time, it is at the cost of converting the whole life of the mass of the working population into working time. And this reference to the free spiritual and social activity of individuals appears. And he contrasts it with material production.

These references thus make me wonder what this "free spiritual and social activity" is. One can associate the term "free" with "conscious," the exercise of the generic human being as an activity conscious of its own determinations where the end of human life is not work, but [that] work is the means to human life. In Volume 3 a similar reference to this appears again with respect to freedom. If consciousness and will is the capacity to organize the process of social metabolism, what activity is there that is not part of that process of developing the capacity to govern that process of social life through work? What is this activity, which is the full development of human activity according to Marx?

Remember this that, if I remember correctly, it is in *The German Ideology*, also referring to whether or not everyone works in society, and to the division between the one who performs the immediate work – which at that moment even appears as manual work – and the one who exercises the intellectual work, a thought that appears there as "philosophical". where what Marx proposes with respect to the development of society and referring to the mutilation of the productive attributes of individuals through the division of labor [is]: that the individual in the morning cultivates, in the afternoon he is a weaver and in the evening he is "critical critical", as if there were a separation between labor that produces use values that reproduce human life materially, and another form of human activity that is not work, and that at some point Marx will associate with artistic expressions and with abstract thinking.

The other clarification I want to make may be this statement that the working day should be shortened on the basis of the increase in productivity and the intensity of work, and the greater proportion of the population that works within the total. This can be seen externally as a judgment of a moral nature, but in reality what Marx is doing there is making a proposal of pure mathematical proportionality. And he is objectively proposing the unity of these determinations, there is no moral content.

Chapter XVI. Various Formulas for the Rate of Surplus-Value.

Let's go to the last chapter [of the section]. I'm going to take just the axis. We have already seen in the previous chapter that it has an analytical character, and it is a question of the relationship between magnitudes, [of] absolute change of magnitudes, and what relative change then occurs on the rate of surplus value. And so, what Marx is going to emphasize in this chapter, in which he is going to compare different possibilities of measuring necessary and surplus labor time, the value of labor power and surplus value, is the critique of... I am going to put it in these words, which are in modern use: the question of the relationship between the value of labour power and surplus value, necessary labour and surplus labour, necessary product and surplus product, should be looked at as if it were a problem of the distribution of the product of value. This is what appears under the name of "income distribution". Is the difference between product value and value product clear?

The value of the product includes *all* the socially necessary abstract labor that was expended to produce that product: it includes the labor done to produce the means of production that are being used plus the living labor that is being applied in the production of that commodity. From the capitalist point of view, it corresponds to constant capital + variable capital + surplus value. The product of value is the new value that was generated, a part that corresponds to the value of labor power and another to surplus value. What Marx criticizes is to make the relationship between surplus value or the value of labor power over the product of total value, that is, to put the value of labor power and divide it by the value of labor power + surplus value. So it seems that instead of being a process of prolongation of the working day beyond what is necessary to reproduce it, it seems that it is a simple distribution of a product that does not necessarily spring from the worker's labor, but is simply a part that was added to the... that there are other "factors" (Marx is going to put it in these terms) that intervene in the creation of that value.

In the neoclassical theory of the factors of production it is exactly represented in this way. In the case of Adam Smith, he has two contradictory explanations. In one of them, the whole product of value is the product of the labourer's labour, and appears as a problem of distribution in which a part is subtracted from the labourer, and constitutes the profit and rent of the land. He is not going to talk about surplus value because it does not appear to him as a result of extending the working day beyond what is necessary, it seems to him that it springs from the normal working day that is given, and then there is this. But in one of the versions, the capitalist appropriates the product of the worker's labor in this distribution and the worker is left with only one residue, and in the other version it is directly the opposite: there are factors of production, each one has a productivity, and only the worker's salary is the product of labor, the rest is not. Therefore, it is characteristic of all classical economics to look at surplus value as a deduction made from the product of the worker's labor, when it is a surplus that the worker adds with his labor to the necessary product. This discussion with classical economics underlies all this and at the end of Volume 3 there is a chapter

dedicated to criticizing this appearance that it is a question of income distribution and not of overcoming the capitalist mode of production.

[Transformations in the materiality of the worker's work]

Do you want to discuss something? If not, we end the section on relative surplus value. If there is nothing, let us go on to look at the transformations in the materiality of the worker's work beyond what Marx develops in *Capital*. Where we have the worker losing his individual productive attributes, the productive forces of the social character of labor multiplied, but those of the manufacturing worker mutilated; and from the worker of large-scale industry to his transformation into an appendage of machinery, he is no longer the active and immediate subject of the transformation of the object, but is next to where the transformation takes place. That is the product of their labor, because the worker who works is the only subject of production. Some transformations have appeared with the development of machinery: one is of maintenance workers, who have some scientific knowledge and some artisanal skill; and, universally, the need for the worker to go through a formal process of education, which is since the school in the capitalist mode of production is the "caricature" of the school of the future, an elementary teaching of arithmetic and reading and writing. This is what we have so far.

At the same time we have the open problem of who is the subject of the production of science. The capitalist has already been proposed by the ideologues of capital themselves that he is not the bearer of scientific knowledge: he appropriates it for free. And the worker, with these determinations that we have been seeing, does not have the attributes to be one either. So, who is that subject? Asking this question is for me the key from which one starts to look at what has happened to the materiality of the work. Because up to here there are only capitalists and workers. Proposals appear within Marxism regarding the petty bourgeoisie or the middle classes... that Marx is going to define the middle class as the small independent producer of commodities, which can appear as "small capitalists". And then there are proposals like Lenin's that since the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the working class requires scientific knowledge, that consciousness must be brought by the most "enlightened" members of another class that is not the working class to the working class, because the working class, with its practical experience, in Lenin's terms, can only develop a *trade-unionist* consciousness, which makes the immediate conditions of sale of labor power, but cannot see beyond.

These proposals continue to appear, and it can be argued whether Lenin said it for the Russian working class of the twentieth century, which was indeed a mass of individuals with a strong presence of illiteracy and access to a possibility of training beyond the elementary zero or almost non-existent, and that it was only applicable in that historical context. and there are those who argue that it is still applicable today. And there are the propositions, as in the case of Braverman[233], that the individual who does "creative" work, diverse, that is not routine, is not a member of the working class (although he does not say where he is a member of

[233] It seems to refer to Harry Braverman.

then), and that if his creative work is replaced and now appears as an appendage of the machinery, then he is a member of the working class. And proposals regarding the development of classes or social strata that are not members of the working class because they are in charge of the development of science, the management of the movement of capital... Something that...

I am going to put it this way: on closer inspection, the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production implies that if what we have here is an autonomous and indirect organization of the unity between production and social consumption, social labor is set in motion as a process that does not have as its immediate purpose the production of use values for human life. but the multiplication of that capacity to set in motion social labor as something that cannot be controlled, where individuals only act as personifications of that social relationship. If there is any possibility—which has not yet appeared, or it did but we have not stopped—of overcoming this mode of production and the mutilation of the productive forces that it contains, this overcoming entails a conscious organization, an immediate unity between social production and consumption, a social relationship in which the individual does not recognize himself as an organ of the process of social life [...] as an attribute that is placed in the commodity that he has to personify, and then in capital. Such conscious organization requires the development of a scientific consciousness, therefore, the revolutionary subject of the capitalist mode of production has to be the subject of the production of that scientific consciousness.

There is another side that says that since the social relationship is going to be so clear, it is not going to be necessary, that everyone is going to realize what it is just by looking immediately. But if we are thinking about what Marx was proposing there, that in that society social needs are multiplied extensively and intensively, the complexity of this process is very far from that transparency that would make scientific knowledge unnecessary. So, if one is looking at that possibility, the subject of the development of the capacity to scientifically organize social production is the bearer of the productive forces that take shape in a higher mode of production. And if the working class were not the bearer of scientific knowledge, to affirm this is to affirm that the working class cannot act as a revolutionary subject, but that it would be the other, the one that creates the conditions for the conscious organization of the process of social life.

So, it is in the face of this that I am going to present a proposal, which since none of this is a problem of abstract knowledge of what is moving in the process of social production, but is the problem of the organization of the political action of the working class as a revolutionary subject. I clarify again: if it could be. We don't know if yes or no, we have to keep moving forward; but if it can be, this is a condition. We have always said that the development of knowledge is the development of the capacity to organize action, and here what is already appearing at stake is the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production.

Alejandro: On that question, I understand that in *Capital*, so far, the misery of the working class is highlighted. For me it is very clear, and it has a similar exposition with the *Manifesto*. What is not clear to me is this question of

Braverman, I did not understand well if this thing appeared that the worker is only a worker if he gets his hands dirty... I understand that since this degradation in the living conditions of the working class is highlighted, in Braverman it would appear that this degradation corresponds to the industrial worker of a given branch, that is why he sees that worker and does not go further.

JIC: I make a clarification: Braverman makes an excellent study of the division of manual labor ("Taylorism"), but then he tries to explain what role this plays in the historical movement and makes these statements. It is a little earlier than everything that is going to appear very strongly with a transformation in the materiality of work that is the disappearance of the manual assembly line, its robotization, and the automation of machinery. Then the whole discourse appears that the working class disappeared because it is seen only as a "factory worker", to put it in these terms. We speak of the end of work, reducing the materiality of work to manual work. And the question one has is: has the working class disappeared, or did the working class change qualitatively because the materiality of work changed qualitatively? I don't know how far Braverman projects what Marx proposes. I suppose so, because in that image he presents of a worker whose work is monotonous, etc. I don't know if Braverman quotes Marx in this sense, but it coincides with this image that Marx is presenting, only that he is looking at a worker a hundred years before the one Braverman is looking at.

Aristides: What you have been developing brings to me this whole question of consciousness and will, which last year was very new to me, and to put it in relation to the traditional debates on the left and socialism in general, of whether revolutionary consciousness comes from outside or from within the working class, if of the vanguard, of the party... Depending on the time, it is also linked to other realities, but this question is present all the time, because in the end what must be explained is why socialism is not reached. And from all the development we have done, we can conclude that it comes from the development of the materiality of labor, and our consciousness also emerges as a result of fact, not as alien to anything, and this question of what we are as a working class materially... For me it was very revealing because in these debates what we are as a working class objectively, materially, was being put aside and to understand myself as a working class, I value it as a change.

JIC: Yes, I remembered one more point that revolutionary consciousness cannot spring from the process of production, because this is for capital, and so it has to sprout outside the process of production, with total independence from the materiality of labor. And then it appears, appealing to direct personal ties as the place of development of the revolutionary character. So the return to the bonds of personal dependence appears as if the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production could spring from there, denying that the condition of the working class as a revolutionary subject could spring from the very materiality of work. So, let's look at these transformations in the materiality of labor, a labor that no longer involves not only the use of machinery, but the production of machinery.

We have already seen the difference between manual work and work with the machine: manual work has to be learned using the tool, but with the machine we

saw that one cannot learn to use it using it, because then it breaks it. To be able to operate with the machine (and before, to be able to produce it), the difference is that in manual work the tool is in the hand of the worker and controlled by the subjectivity of the worker, and here it is part of an automatic mechanism and what must be controlled are natural forces, and that control is going to be objectified in the machinery so that the machinery automatically discharges them on the machine. tool and this operates on the work object. And so, the starting point of the production of machinery is the knowledge of the natural forces that are going to be put into operation. And it is a knowledge that does not have a subjective character, but an objective one, because natural forces operate objectively in the same way, and then it is necessary to objectively appropriate them. And the objective appropriation of these natural forces is scientific, objective knowledge. And then we have to look at the material conditions for the development of scientific knowledge.

What do we have so far? Who would appear to be the "nature" of the capitalist mode of production? Who has to put capital into operation, who has to personify capital? The capitalist. If in order to personify capital one must begin by having scientific knowledge, then it should be the bearer of scientific knowledge. But now we see that there are two abysses between the subjectivity of the capitalist and that of the scientist. First, being capitalist and at the same time having scientific subjectivity are determinations that do not have to go together, and on the contrary, they are rather separate. Because the capitalist cannot study how a certain force of nature is going to operate if at the same time he is managing his capital that is already in operation. And even less will he do it if he is really – let's put it that way – a simple consumer of surplus value, who is going to live the good life instead of trying to figure out how he can control natural forces. That is the limitation that Marx points out and that Ure himself[234] says that the capitalists of the chemical industry do not know a word about chemistry. But this is not simply the full barrier for the capitalist to be the subject of scientific production.

Alexander: Now that you mentioned it, a question arose from Engels: he was the son of a bourgeois, and he was fully entitled to inherit the factory. I understand that there is a rupture of that bond, but as a subject he advanced in scientific knowledge. It may be a particular case but it is significant with respect to the development of scientific knowledge in society. What role does it play?

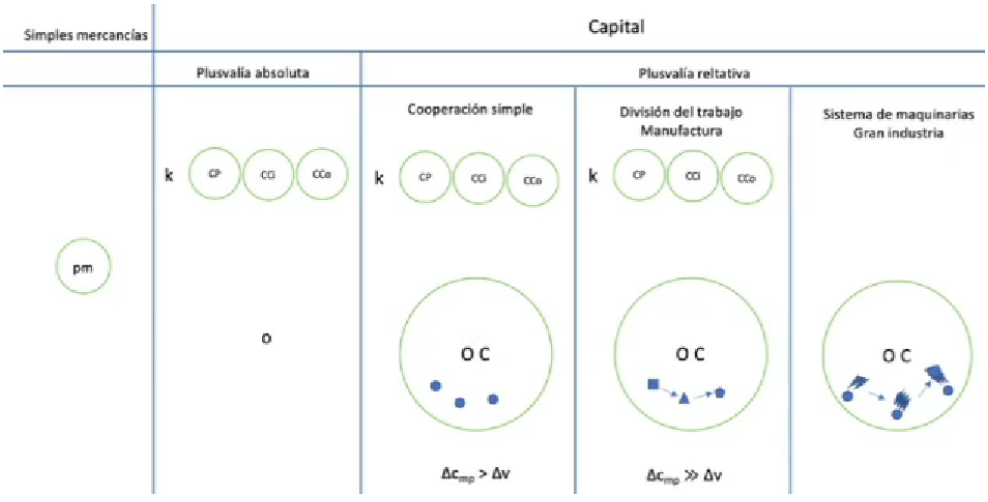
JIC: I left this for later. Because when you look at the Stevensons father and son, they were capitalists and they are the bearers of that development. You look at Edison and you look at it too. A situation that reappears with the development not of computing, but of software and so on, where there are capitalists who are bearers of scientific knowledge and personify capital. But let's look at an aspect that is often hidden in the case of Stevenson, Ford, Steve Jobs, Bill Gates... It is not simply the individual work of that capitalist or incipient capitalist. And this goes to the second determination. Then, even taken in their purity, they appear as exceptions. Marx was not a member of the working class either, he resisted selling his labor power with great enthusiasm, so to speak. He came from a family with a

[234] The chemist Marx quotes.

father who is not entirely clear to me, who could be a civil servant but at the same time was a lawyer who worked independently (a producer of commodities, in that case). But just then I come back to this contrast, and I go to the second feature that has to do with this.

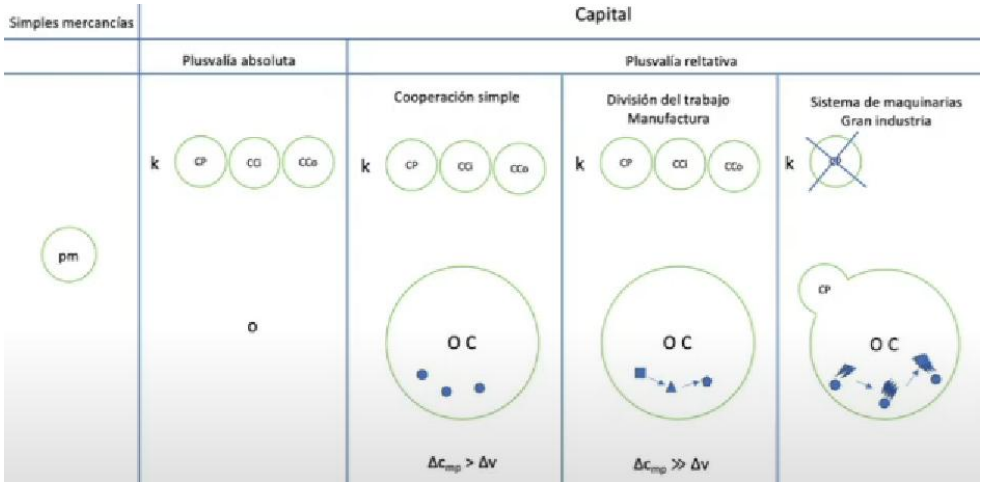
Scientific work has a necessarily collective, social character, and the capitalist is an isolated individual, not an individual organ of the collective labor process. Even if he were a collective capitalist, he would have the function of managing capital, not the development of science. Then there appears a need for capital for someone to personify it, and up to this point the capitalist cannot fully personify it, and neither can the worker we were watching accompanying Marx. But we said that the concrete subject of this process of social life is capital, which — since we are talking about real subsumption — is what produces human beings as what they are, as workers and capitalists. And then we are going to find that capital has the need to produce human beings capable of developing scientific work, for which they need to be bearers of an objective consciousness. The capitalist class cannot provide for the capital of these individuals. The only place left to look for them is the working class.

What is going to happen is that, for a part of the workers, it will become a condition for selling their labor power to be the bearer of a scientific consciousness. It is not that the workers have a scientific vocation and began to study. The development of this scientific consciousness, of the design of machinery, first of the mastery of natural forces, their objectification in machinery and its operation, begins to require workers who have as their productive attributes different degrees and concrete forms of scientific consciousness. This has a content. I said that the capitalist mode of production has a revolutionary character, in which it is now going to be shown that the subject who is in charge of the development and application of machinery has changed.



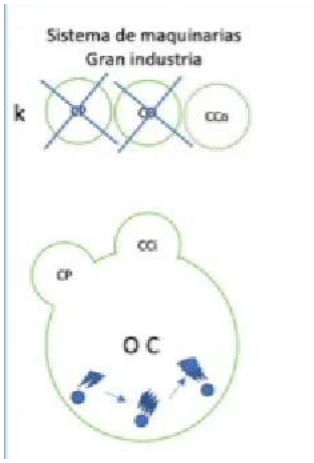
In this scheme, I have the worker and his transformations, and the functions of the capitalist. That here is not only looked at production, but also at production,

circulation and the exercise of coercion (CP, CCi, Cco).[235] And that it is important to see it remarked that before it was simply the capitalist (sometimes the figure of the foreman appeared but it was basically the functions of capital). It is important to me to put them together because the transformation we are going to look at encompasses the entire management of capital, not just its action as a CP. And up to this point, what we had of the collective worker with large-scale industry, with its condition as an appendage of machinery, what is going to happen is that we begin to ask ourselves about the first function of the capitalist, as the PC of capital, which begins with the development of being that PC and of the control over natural forces and their knowledge. And with what we were unfolding, we find that the capitalist cannot satisfy this need of capital, and that consequently capital is taking him out of this function, and is incorporated into the body of the collective worker.



In the first instance, it is a specialized organ of the collective worker that is in charge of the scientific organization of production, the development of machinery, the knowledge of natural forces in order to be able to objectify it in machinery. And so here we have the revolutionary character of the capitalist mode of production. When we started the capital was this [Table of absolute surplus value]. And I don't want to get ahead of myself, but it is useful for me to make an observation that Marx makes in the chapter following the next one, saying that the capitalist has a historical right to exist, which – he is going to add, because he quotes a legal author – is not an acquired historical right. Its right to exist is that it is the organizer of the social labor carried out privately and independently, the one who manages this organization. And now what we see is that the very development of the machinery system in large-scale industry is beginning to take away from the capitalist that function it had.

[235] Consciousness in production, consciousness in circulation and coercive consciousness.



The next function, Marx does not develop here, he only puts it as: he has to bring his commodities into circulation and transform them into money, and transform money into commodities. But as the scale of social production, the magnitude of capital, develops with the production of relative surplus value, it is an increasingly complex task, it is the function of the capitalist because it is part of the personification of capital. And now managing capital in circulation is a task that has an objective character, the plan of production can no longer be in the subjectivity of the capitalist; In order to control the enormous scale of capital in circulation, the organization of the sales process can only be done with collective work and with a scientific awareness of commercial management. And then we are going to find that second task that was typical of the capitalist but that escapes his personal subjectivity more and more, even if he wants and puts all his will to fulfill it. And this management needs to be done collectively and with scientific consciousness, and it is developed by a specialized organ of the collective worker.

The task that remains to capital is the exercise of coercion. Since it has an antagonistic relationship with the workers, it has to coerce them to personify its capital. And now we have to coerce a collective worker who can be made up of tens and even hundreds of thousands of individuals, which includes diverse individuals such as a worker appendage to machinery, the auxiliary worker with the least development of his productive attributes, but we also have to coerce the workers who exercise the CP and the ICC because they have an antagonistic relationship with capital in their condition as sellers of the power of the capital. work. Therefore, coercion must be exercised through a collective body with a scientific conscience, because it is not the same to coerce one individual as another. Thus, the function of coercion also escapes the subjectivity of the capitalist and is incorporated into the body of the collective worker.

We find ourselves with this transformation of the materiality of work, and what a worker is and what the working class is. Marx makes the observation that the worker can be productive even if he is not in the immediate process of production, but I stop here. Then we will stop to look at what happened to the worker and the capitalist and we will look at concrete manifestations.

Aristides: It is difficult for me to see that specific figure of coercion. Would it be a policeman, in the public sphere, or in the more private sphere of the factory?

JIC: So far we are looking specifically at the interior of individual capital. I always tend to give an example, because the place of these exhibitions is often particularly appropriate: in the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires, there is a career in "Labor Relations" that, according to its creators and managers, intends to train union representatives of the workers. And in practice, the students he has are workers in the personnel offices, whose function is only to exert coercion on the rest of the collective worker he is part of. Coercion is not limited to that organ, it extends throughout the body of the collective worker, and now I will return to that later. But to exercise that coercion you have to have that scientific awareness.

When Taylor develops how manual labor should be done on the manual assembly line, he is very clear about the combination of the technical problem with that of coercion: how to know whether or not the worker is doing what he has to do. And it was rightly called the taking of methods and times. The method is to do how the work is done, but measuring the time of the individual who is doing the work is to exert coercion on him. Then a whole scientific knowledge of the exercise of coercion appears.

In personnel selection processes, the intervention of psychologists fulfills the role of seeing if the individual has the aptitudes for work, among which is whether he or she is going to adjust to the form of coercion to which he or she is going to be subjected. I always make this differentiation, although I leave it for a little later: doctors who control absenteeism, it is pure exercise of coercion. Because he is a doctor who as such could have the function of diagnosing the worker who could not go to work and operate in the healing process, but no one of those doctors has a function of those. And the worst thing that can happen to the sick worker is that the doctor who does personnel control arrives, and he went to the pharmacy to buy the medicines he needed, because then he is going to write that he was not at home, which is the declaration that he is not sick. This is only coercion, but it can only be done with a scientific conscience. A worker who is not a doctor cannot control absenteeism because he does not know how to differentiate whether an individual is sick or not. It is a coercive function performed by an individual who has gone through a long process of scientific training.

I have had to argue sometimes because economists look at us accountants with contempt many times, and I always said that the accountant has the same scientific training as the economist, but the difference is that one has the scientific training to manage individual capital, and the other to manage the total capital of society or individual capitals in relation to the total capital of society. Both have scientific knowledge, their difference is in what the object is. But one is faced with this determination.

Alejandro: Within the collective worker who carries productive consciousness, a wide range of engineers, or industrial, mechanical, chemical engineers... or is it broader?

JIC: Enter the physicist who develops quantum mechanics... We are not going to be so pretentious: the whole theory of mechanics, the one who applies that theory to the production of machinery, the one who is then going to use that machinery – if an engineer is needed it will be an engineer – the one who has to make the production plan, but also the one who designs how to make a production plan, etc. All of them enter into this condition of worker with these attributes. I'm going to extend it more later.

Alejandro: But the case of the accountant has more attributes in common with the business administrator, and that would encompass more than consciousness in circulation, right? Part of what productive consciousness is...

JIC: I said with the economist. To the extent that you participate in the development of a production plan, you are acting as part of the COP. But the essence of his work is not in... the one who operates in the purchase and sale of commodities, the one who does the marketing... And it is to the extent that it participates with its knowledge regarding what is going to happen with sales in the organization of the production plan, it is within this productive body, but its essential function is linked to circulation. Crosses of all kinds appear, when it is not simply a specialized organ.

If we look at the capitalist first, what we see is that capital, through the development of the production of relative surplus value through the system of machinery in large-scale industry, is taking away from him the function he has as the personification of capital. And the function that remains is that of being the private owner of capital, without having a function within the process of capital valorization. So, it is capital that is converting the capitalist, *within the capitalist mode of production itself*, into a pure social parasite.

If when we began to see it he had this right to exist as an organizer of private and independent labor, now capital itself is taking away this function, and he only has to take a part of the surplus value and allocate it to his individual consumption, because he no longer even knows how to accumulate that capital. Sometimes I have had discussions about this, regarding the role of the shareholders' meeting where the capitalists are the owners of the capital. And what one has in front of you is that at the assembly, once the whole process of valorization of capital has unfolded, the result of such a mass of movements, in many cases contradictory, of different natures, of magnitudes that are commensurate but have an enormous complexity, that the individual who is there does not have the capacity to say what should be done with it. And that the appearance that the capitalist is the ultimate decider is an illusion.

And a while ago I mentioned my original status as a public accountant. I have prepared reports, one that was consolidated to the management of the company, which did not even accept the number of decimals because nothing reached that scale, I had to put "x'000000000... ". When you look at that, you say: the one who receives all this information, which I also cooked up to say what I want him to say, is not simply a purely objective reflection: there are relationships, interests of a

contradictory nature that can imply that the one who presents this presents it in a way that is not what it should, for which he has to have scientific knowledge. because if not, it would be easy to discover. And at that point it is something unmanageable. So, what do the owners of capital do? They hire the service of another capitalist who has a collective worker who is specialized in evaluating these reports, and another capitalist who has a collective worker specialized in resolving what is done in a certain situation or another. But the immediate participation in the management of capital is negligible.

You just put Elon Musk: he can't manage his capital; if it ever managed it directly, it is already totally out of that possibility, and what it fulfills is a role of representation of capital. It is a figure that serves for its capital to occupy certain places. Suddenly he says nonsense, and it will cost him dearly, but he does not manage his capital. When one looks at the case of Ford, Henry Ford first went down in history as the inventor of the manual assembly line system. And aside from the many who must have been involved in this, there was an engineer selling labor power who was the head of this, and who a few years later (I think in the early 1940s) wrote a book explaining how he had done it. But all the labor of the workers belongs to the capitalist; Consequently, even this individual's name was appropriated by capital that put his name in its place.

What we have in front of us is that capital is turning the capitalist into a parasite from the point of view of the valorization process. What happens in the body of the collective worker? The first thing that appeared was this contradiction: now there are sellers of labor power whose job it is to personify capital as value that is valorized, whether in production, in circulation, or in the exercise of coercion. Then, the contradiction between seller and buyer of labor power was introduced into the body of the collective worker, and in the same way into the working class: now there is an antagonistic relationship between workers who sell labor power. And I return to the collective worker. How far does this antagonistic relationship extend? It is clear that the salesman of labor power who is at the head of the company, who appears as the CEO, is the one who exerts coercion on all those who are below. But let's go to the other extreme, the ordinary worker who is simply the coordinator of a work team: he has to exert coercion on the others who are part of that team. This extends throughout the collective worker, here appears a worker who has as a condition to sell his labor power, to exercise that coercion, if he does not exercise it he is left without social relations. And coercion is exercised far beyond what immediately appears within the body of the collective worker.

I always give the example of the doctor who controls absenteeism. But the one who is going to act to heal the sick worker is a doctor who knows that the worker has an illness that if he stays in bed for a week it will pass and will not leave him with sequelae. But he also knows that there is a pill that the worker takes, and after three days he is in a position to return, but also that this pill makes a hole in the worker's stomach, although for now it will not be noticed, he will only have heartburn and will not be able to excuse himself from going to work. And that worker who has an objective consciousness of what he is doing, has to prescribe the pill to the worker and not leave him in bed for a week in peace, because if he does, he will not find a buyer for his labor power, the capitalist will take him out.

Let's go to another terrain: the scientist who is developing the pill, who looks at himself and does not even think that he is a member of the working class, a seller of labor power: he sees himself as a scientist, and that science is neutral. He knows that if instead of developing the pill that cures in three days, he makes one that cures in five but makes a smaller hole, that does not serve as a use value from the point of view of capital.

Thus, the exercise of coercion extends to the entire interior of the collective worker, to relations between workers of different capitals, with different character, intensity, and ways of manifesting themselves. But what we find now is that the antagonistic relation between the seller of labour-power and the one who has to act as a buyer on behalf of capital is within and extends throughout the collective worker, and transcends that body and extends throughout the working class. We saw the relationship of solidarity that constitutes the working class, and now this relationship has to overcome... It is no longer simply the competition to sell labor power, now it is the antagonistic relationship that one is going to act in the production process as a simple personification of labor power, or personification of a labor power that in turn personifies capital. This is a central question from the point of view of the political organization of the working class [...].

[II]

We had agreed to discuss the transformations in the materiality of workers' work, the displacement of the capitalist as the personification of capital in functions, to whom what remains is the ownership of capital, what happened to the capitalist transformed by the very movement of capital accumulation into a parasite (not abstractly for social life, but for this concrete subject that is capital in the capitalist mode of production), and the incorporation within the collective worker and then the working class of an antagonistic relationship, because there are workers who, in order to sell their labor power, capital demands of them as an attribute that it be personified. Where the class struggle, as a way of expressing the unity of the movement of the total capital of society, now has within one of the poles an antagonistic relationship that is not of simple competition of labor power but because a part of the working class directly personifies capital. What do you propose in this regard?

Alejandro: I raised something last time. In general (not only with respect to figures such as Marx and Engels), I understand that in their historical moment of the development of capital there was not this latent separation between the manager of capital as a specific organ of the working class and the capitalist. [**1**] And if at that historical moment, this need to personify capital led to the capitalist himself having to develop scientific knowledge, that would be a first question. And then, with respect to what I see today of that personification, for example, with CEOs, I see that they are subjects who have to sell their labor power to a company with a significant concentration in general, and they have to manage the different "business units" of the same capital, and... [**2**] Why does it appear to the CEO, as a more generic figure, that he is not a worker, and why does he appear that way to other fragments of the working class? I understand that there is the question of

antagonism, but antagonism in itself does not define whether a subject is working class or not.

JIC: [1] Regarding the first part, of the scientific consciousness of the capitalist, in the nineteenth century or even the end of the eighteenth century with the Industrial Revolution... To what extent are the capitalists individually the ones who handle scientific knowledge? I could only have indications about it (and mixed up). But what one has as a determination is: the English population of 1820 had two years of average schooling. All the teaching was paid, and the workers, with these hours of work that we saw, and the salary they received... It is highly unlikely that a salesman of labor power could have a scientific background. So where could these individuals come from?

Those who make the most ... as what could appear as the foundations (I don't know if "basic science")... I don't know where Newton came from. Leibniz was a mixture of mercenary, diplomat, mathematician... Smith was a state bureaucrat, but how had he come to be? His first concern had been about astronomy. We would have to look at it. Then there is the case of Hegel, who was for a very long period of his life tutor to a child from a German noble family, before he could become a professor (and I think, eventually, rector). So, a lot of that knowledge... In addition, they were more elementary conditions of knowledge than those that exist today, in the sense that it could be achieved without all the specialized processes that are required today due to the complexity of those labor processes. Last time I gave the example of the Stevensons. We would have to see in the looms who are developing all this.

In any case, when Adam Smith tries to explain profit on capital, what he says is: this is not a managerial salary, because for that work you can hire someone to do it. Thus, individuals appear who had to have the capacity to manage the capital of an individual capitalist, and who did not have capital of their own. Then Marx makes a reference to the transformation of the capitalist who in the process of concentration and centralization of capital are being annihilated, who are becoming (this is in Volume 3) managers for the capitals that defeated them in competition. But the image is this. In addition, life expectancy at birth in England in 1820 was 30 years, there was not even time for the individual to develop too much scientific knowledge. It is clear that it is the life expectancy of the mass of the working population in these conditions of exploitation of the labour force, of 16 hours of work, 6 days a week, with deficient food and without schooling. But I said... You, Alexander, cited Engels, who was from a capitalist family, and Marx the son of a lawyer and bureaucrat, and I think that some ancestor on the mother's side was part of the "low" nobility that was linked to administrative management. And there is the Lenin thing that we also talked about, that the working class could not achieve revolutionary consciousness by itself.

The difference that we have in being able to deal with this, apart from the fact that it exists in a general way, is that we look at ourselves and we are sellers of labor power, and the material form of our work is scientific labor. So one looks at oneself and has the answer to where the labor force that makes this type of production comes from, that produces scientific knowledge, that brings it into

operation in the production process... In an aspect that I generally do not advance much because it is not in *Capital*, but when we look at the state as the political representative of the total capital of society, it is very present there... On the one hand, the scientific production in charge of that management, which in the case of Adam Smith, I don't know where it came from but he is a customs and university official, so it is as if one sees that it is not only about the movement of individual capital, but that it is a function that the working class fulfills in the movement of the total capital of society. Thus the working class finds itself with the contradiction that its political management is the management of capital and, therefore, of antagonism with itself, no longer as a collective worker but as a working class.

[2] So, for me, today it is easy to recognize oneself in that condition because it is what one is. Now... I don't know if I ever raised it, but I think Alejandro, you suffered it in your own flesh: in all the courses, while they were face-to-face (later, when they stopped being face-to-face, it was something that could not work), in the first class we always did a survey asking about where they were in the career, what they thought of the subject and the relationship between political economy, and asking what social class they considered they belonged to. With this experience.
I started doing this in the faculty of economic sciences, and when we started teaching in social sciences, the people in the chair who came from social sciences said that here you can't ask like that because they are going to answer that they are not members of any social class. So we had to disaggregate the question and it was: "Do you consider that you belong to some social class? If so, which one?" And the universal answer was: "Middle class", "petty bourgeoisie", "lower-middle class"... And, very exceptionally, "working class" or "working class" appeared.

In development, not at this point that we are here but in that of reproduction, when we saw what happens to the worker in the process of individual consumption (which I am not going to unfold here, when we get there we will see it), the question I asked was: Why if you, the university students, are free individuals, do we have to coerce teachers? What happens to that free individual who is faced with the development of his freedom – of objective knowledge – we have to take his assistance, give him tests... (all forms of teacher control)? When we got to this other point it was clear that they were members of the working class, and then the question is why none of them in the initial survey recognized themselves as such.

This gave rise to different discussions. But there was a student from General Sarmiento (he was a political militant, he was in university politics and I think beyond that as well), who was very impressed with this and had no better idea than to stand at the door of the teachers' room, and he asked each one who came out if he considered himself a member of the working class (I don't know how he asked him). And there were some who came to insult him because of the question, he felt attacked. And when one looks, in the realm of social scientists, that what they are supposed to study is the form of the general social relation in the capitalist mode of production, the answer is not "We are members of the working class", but

of the "petty bourgeoisie", the "middle class"... They cannot be recognized in this condition.

Another thing that I always raise at this point is that if one looks at Argentina, there is an expression of how in the field of university students who see themselves as critics of the capitalist mode of production, not those who do apologetics, there was a slogan that I think is no longer heard, which was: "Workers and students, united and forward." This was sung by the students, which means that we were not recognizing ourselves as members of the working class, because we would have to unite with the workers. If it had been in our consciousness, the slogan would have been: "Workers who are in the process of forming our labor power, and workers who are immediately selling their labor power, united and forward," because that was what was at stake. And what it is showing is that there is no recognition of one's condition as a worker. I don't think the slogan is sung anymore, but it is still present. It is the "Left Front *and* the Workers", by which he means that on the left they are not workers. The same with proposals such as "workers, women, young people". And this is an expression... all people with a scientific conscience, because in particular the heads of political organizations are workers whose product of their labor has the form of scientific knowledge, all sellers of labor power (by exception there are some who do not, but those I know are all), who cannot recognize themselves in this condition.

Then, Braverman's idea appeared that only the one who does a routine, not creative job is a worker... and the other is not. And there are proposals regarding the condition of teachers based on these proposals, I understand, because of the structure. Except for the private teacher who teaches on his own, who would have to look at his situation, but every teacher, from the point of view of legal formality, has all the determinations of what is called here "Work in a relationship of dependency", purchase and sale of labor power: he has a fixed schedule, he works with means of production that are not his own, he has what concrete labor he has to do determined by who buys the labor power from him... It has all the attributes, and yet there are claims that they are not members of the working class.

I understand that one of the arguments is: because they have control over their individual labor process. And my answer to that is that a worker who loses all control over his individual labor cannot work. The teacher and any worker always retain a control, which is no longer that of the independent producer of commodities, but is in turn subject to the control of the capitalist or of the person who personifies capital, but he is required to have control of his individual labor in his condition as a free individual. In general, capital needs the productive attributes of free workers, alienated in capital, not those of a slave or a serf.

There is this reference that Marx makes to what happens to the free worker with respect to the slave (I think we have already passed it) in which he states that the slaves saw their condition as human subjects mutilated and they unloaded that mutilation on the instruments of work, in particular on the animals of labor, and then they had to give them very crude instruments, heavy, which allowed a low productivity of labor, so that they would not break them; in contrast to the free worker, to whom the capitalist gives the most refined instrument of labor possible.

And, woe to those who break it, because they will be left without being able to sell their labor power and will be left without social relations. Thus, capital demands this condition of productive attributes that correspond to a free individual, at the same time that this individual is produced with a consciousness that does not allow him to recognize himself in his condition as a worker.

Edgardo: On this, I wonder if, especially this portion of the working class with an expanded productive subjectivity, the fact of not being able to recognize themselves as members of the working class would not even be a productive attribute that capital demands of them.

JIC: And what does it produce?

Edgardo: And that produces the same capital. Let us say that if this portion of the working class does not develop with this consciousness, it cannot fulfill its function as the personification of capital within the collective worker.

JIC: And at the same time the development of this recognition is a condition of the general movement of capital. That is why it has the form of a political action of the working class to produce this consciousness for itself, it is a necessity of it as a historical subject. And one of the expressions of this antagonism within the working class takes the form, for example—in very immediate terms—of the contents and methods by which the consciousness of the working class is produced. It is one of the expressions of this antagonism within the working class itself. When you take the educational structure of the state, there is no one there who is not a member of the working class. And the form of the development of consciousness has the form of the struggle over the contents and forms of the methods of educational formation.

Pedro: In this regard, it seems to me even more serious when the political organizations of the left that claim to be the personification of change and revolution, do not recognize this of the working class either. Then, when a member who is professional, with a scientific conscience, comes to your organization, they recognize him as a petty bourgeois. So, part of the militancy is to go to the factory, to the fields, and they end up degrading their subjectivity, fragmenting the struggle...

JIC: Yes, yes. And also when they go – here in the early 60s and 70s it was called "proletarianization" – it is that the members of the political organization themselves neither recognize themselves nor are they recognized by others as members of the working class. The image is that to be a member of the working class you have to be in the factory or in the countryside. They are the concrete forms that the production of consciousness takes.

I am going to go to two things of the at least three aspects that were in Alejandro's proposal. First of all, I will clarify one: when one has a worker who has the development of his labor force with the character of a labor force that does complex work, today it is clear that simple work is not having no education, it became — and in some places it appears very markedly — not only having a

primary school but having a secondary school. which sometimes appears as incomplete and sometimes as complete, because that is the minimum condition for selling labor power. But if we are talking about a consciousness that is still developing 6, 7, 10 years more, it is clear that it is not the general condition and therefore it will do a more complex work. We have to remember again that it is one thing that determines the complexity of work, and another that determines the value of labor power.

Complex labor has as its content the time that the individual worked to produce himself with special productive attributes. The value of that individual's labor power does not include the individual's own labor, but the work that other individuals privately and independently did so that he could develop his labor power with the ability to do complex work. They are two determinations totally separate from each other, what enters into one does not enter into the other and vice versa. So, when one looks at complex labor, Marx says: well, okay, it's more than complex labor, but it costs more to produce the individual's labor power and it is compensated. What one sees by the concrete movement of the price at which labor power is paid, the wage difference goes beyond what can be the greater cost of producing this labor power, when it appears as: well, but it produces more value far beyond what an individual can produce more value by himself. So, one has the question of what happens to this individual with respect to being exploited by capital. Because what you can find is that...

Let us take it this way: what he is paid is the value of his labour-power (then we have to look at the components of this value of labour-power), but it is clear that he cannot produce more value than the value of his labour-power, and therefore, in so far as his labour has the character of individual labour, it cannot produce surplus value, because the mass of value it produces is less than that which it is paid for its labor power, and therefore it would not be exploited by capital on an individual basis. But why is this individual working in these conditions? Because it is an organ within the collective worker, and this collective worker, from having that organ, has a multiplied power to produce surplus value, and consequently as an organ of the collective worker it is exploited by capital, despite the fact that surplus value is not extracted from it individually, since its labor power is more expensive than all the value it could produce with its complex labor. with their intensity of work, which appear high because they are often individuals who live... not in the general sense, but in the specific sense: its life is the life of capital. Then we're going to look at that.

Alejandro: Which specific worker are you referring to?

JIC: You took the CEOs, but I go down: in general, a manager. Let's take it this way: a situation (I'm hesitating with the examples) in a private medical service. What does the star surgeon, salesman of labor power, have compared to any other surgeon? You have developed productive attributes that the other does not have, how much longer did it take you to develop that? It has a useful life of several decades, it did not spend several more decades developing that knowledge it has. That worker, suppose he is paid for the value of his labour-power. In principle, he has such a marked salary difference as to say: well, but does he have a job that

much more complex? If the value of your labor power is 2 to 1, does it have twice as much time dedicated to learning, to developing its skill with respect to others? If it had twice as much time, then one could say that it produces twice as much value in the same time because it is complex work, and there is this parallel that Marx said that since it produces twice as much value, its labor power is double, and it has a rate of surplus value. But what appears in these cases, especially in middle managers, is that what is paid as a salary is higher than the value that that isolated individual may be producing.

Now there are much larger wage gaps. In the 60s and 70s, the more or less standard scales between individuals who had a hierarchical position with respect to others but who did not have a much more extensive training, if the head gained 100, the one who followed gained something like 70% of the head. Which looked at from top to bottom was 70%, but from bottom to top it was 50%. Moving up a step was 50% more salary, and the next one was 70% more. Even at that scale it has a difference that it cannot be said that what happens is that one does a more complex job and that is why it produces more value, because the complexity of the work is simply the time it took to learn to develop that work skill that the second one is not supposed to have. And that's why it's second on the ESTA scale.

When today one looks at the salary scales in private companies, there are abysses of difference, this structure no longer exists. [...] What can happen above a certain wage level is that that individual cannot produce more value than his labor power costs, and he is paid the value of his labor power, not that he is paid above. And when you look at it in isolation, capital is not extracting surplus value from that individual, but when it looks at it as an organ of the collective worker, as a member of the collective worker, what it does is produce surplus value for capital. One has to take this into account with regard to these processes in which there is the question of whether he is a productive laborer or not from the point of view of capital, whether he is a worker or not, what are the concrete determinations of which this worker is the bearer.

Since the production of surplus value is not present in general consciousness, on the contrary... When we get to Volume 3 we will see that the image appears that in reality the worker in his person is the bearer of a "social capital", and then it seems that he is paid more because the capital he has is larger and because he earns a higher interest rate. So, there is no immediate discussion of whether or not this individual produces surplus value individually, if he is not exploited individually but as a working class... This is not presented to the worker himself.

Alejandro [Chat]: Bourdieu is the perfection of that appearance.

JIC: Well, it's this development that's strongly present today.

Now let's go to the other aspect of the question. In a society where there are no bonds of personal dependence, despite the fact that in the capitalist mode of production the bonds of personal dependence are advancing significantly, the only way to differentiate one individual from another within the working class is

through what he is paid for his labor power. what capacity he has to dispose of the general social relation. When we advance in the other section we will see, not with respect to the workers, but Marx is going to look at it with respect to the capitalist, that there is something that is the expenses of representing capital, which appears as a component of the value of that labor power, which does not appear in that of other labor power. He has to fulfill roles... He has to be in the right places, at the right times, relating to the right individuals, and show that the capital he works for is prosperous. One can say that this is not part of the value of his labor power, but it is part of the wages of the worker.

But the other thing that includes the value of labor power is that in order to produce—let's put it in these terms—a capanga[236], the capanga does not have to be seen as equal to those who are going to have them under their control. And the only way not to recognize oneself as equal to others or for others to recognize oneself as equal is the salary difference. And that is part of the value of labor power: it is necessary for this individual to consume things that others cannot consume in order for him to have the necessary consciousness to exercise coercion over those others, and not to recognize himself as belonging to the same class as others. Thus, something that could fall within the category of "moral determination" appears as a determinant of the value of labor power, but not because of the conditions that Marx sets of how labor power is accustomed to sell itself, but because this is a necessity of capital to produce the consciousness of the worker who in turn has the function of exercising coercion on other workers. This is a central question from the point of view of the political organization of the working class: how to operate on these consciousnesses of both points, in what Pedro proposed that neither the hierarch recognizes himself as a member of the working class nor do the subordinates see it that way either. The problem is how to establish the relationship of solidarity. […] I don't know if this, Alejandro, was what you were...

[Alejandro mentions that he has experienced how his boss, as an industrial engineer, went to eat at a restaurant while they were given garbage in the dining room.]

JIC: That can be representation expense depending on the restaurant, although it can be a common restaurant and is part of the differentiation. In addition, it is typical that lunchtime at work can be the moment in which, as direct personal ties are established, hierarchies are erased. And so, the existence of separate dining rooms is part of... I later corrected myself: representation expenses are not the value of the labor force, they are expenses that are added to the salary. It is that way in which the individual does not recognize himself or herself and cannot be recognized by others with the possibility of establishing a relationship of solidarity.

Ivan: I have a question. We start from Marx's development (and I think it is very explicit in Chapter VIII) that the working class has a need to recognize itself as a class because it has a need to group, to struggle so that labor power is realized at its value. And for a good part of... Let's say, until perhaps the 1970s, we can see a

[236] [Argentina] In rural language, he is in charge of the plantations.

long-lasting process where the working class fights, obtains victories that are translated into legal laws that govern the purchase and sale of labor power and at the same time expresses a need for capital that can reproduce itself with its normal attributes. The question I had is what does the fact imply, *today*, that important sectors of the working class (teachers, scientists, professionals...), is the new physiognomy that the working class is beginning to have, the fact that it does not recognize itself as such. Why does a setback appear and need to be recognized as something different? Because in the exposition it would seem that it is a problem of the way Marxists see it or how it is interpreted, but what about the problem of why that same subject needs not to recognize itself in this way in order to overcome capitalism? Because that power could also appear because he is more enlightened, he has more tools and it would seem that he could have that awareness, and yet a setback appears.

And I wanted to say one more thing. I remember in my sociology degree that I had a problem because most sociologists were presented as "the end of the working class". And at one point I was able to reconcile because sociologists began to appear who said that it did not disappear, but that it spread to China, Asia... And when I approached this proposal I was very impressed because it was the way to understand that in reality it is not that the working class had disappeared, but that its physiognomy was beginning to change. But in that also appeared the fact of decline in the sense that there was no political or class action as could be seen in the previous stage to the current one.

JIC: You said that on the one hand the working class conquered a series of things, and on the other hand it was a necessity of capital. In my understanding it is that the content is that it was a need of capital, and the form is the struggle of the working class, it is not that there are two parallel processes. Why did the working class have the strength to personify the action that brings all these transformations? Because capital needed a working class that was not the one it had at the beginning of the nineteenth century. So, it's the same thing that it still is now, the same determination.

The other thing is the approach that I make in general, which I don't know if it is relevant here and that has these two expressions that stuck with me. One is the unions of the "hierarchical" personnel that in general existed in state enterprises. Relations of solidarity are produced between the different "levels" within that collective worker and within the working class. Because those who do not see themselves as members of the working class, but of the capitalist class, also have relations of solidarity with each other, and also compete with each other for the sale of their labor power. And the academic field, which has this type of worker, where relations of solidarity appear and the most miserable relations of competition appear for who sells his labor power, precisely because of the materiality of the work itself, which is the expression of the intellectual activity of the subject, and the consequences of the hierarchical structure is that the individual cannot think for himself but has to realize that he is thinking like the individual. that it has at the top of the ladder because if not, it will not be able to sell its labor power. It's like the subject of his work is at the same time... Nor is it simply so, but the worker who sells his labour-power to individual capital goes

home and can think what he wants. The individual who is working intellectually has to think about what corresponds to what he is doing, and if not, he cannot sell his labor power. This is one of the expressions of recognition as a member of the working class, of making a separate union. For example, in metallurgists, it was ASIMRA[237], it was also up to a certain level. In the state companies it was at all levels, the union of professionals or hierarchical, I don't remember what it was called, of sanitary works, even the highest members were members of the union.

The other issue, which is a manifestation of a stage that no longer exists, is this of the salary differences that I referred to earlier. I had the example of the workplace issue. I was once able to consult a Swede at the time when Sweden was supposed to be the rise of social democracy, working conditions and so on. What salary difference was there between a plant worker and an engineer? This was an engineer, and the proposal he made to me was that when they both started working (one started a little later because he had training and the other didn't) they earned the same. And when they reached the highest point of their career, the engineer earned six times more, but of those six, four were paid in taxes, so the specific salary difference was 1:2. What he did propose is that the engineer had more capacity to access conditions for the reproduction of life, which – I put it in these terms – was accessed not as a seller of labor power but as a citizen, he had more knowledge of where the "benefits" that capital gives to citizens were. That differentiation no longer exists anywhere in the world, I understand, it should not even exist in Sweden anymore.

It is true that in these years there are complexities of work that have been extended, but the complexity of the simplest work has also been extended, which is why educational processes have been extended. So, in what you propose, what I understand that appears is that capital, throughout the nineteenth century and until the 1970s in which it exploited difference, needed *relatively* undifferentiated workers, who were experiencing these transformations in a way that was ... I mean: there were some brutal differences, especially when one compares it with the current situation is that one can say "relatively undifferentiated". So, the salary level is relatively undifferentiated. And from the development of computing, the automation of machinery and robotization, it did not need more... The assembly-line worker, because he was at the heart of the production of machinery even though he did manual work, had his fate tied to the general worker of large-scale industry. Then it gave the unions and mass political parties of the working class.

That no longer exists, capital needs strongly differentiated workers, and the most immediate way of differentiating is wage differentiation. Where, in addition, for a certain type of worker, the conditions are not even maintained... It's not that they came in parallel and one went up and the other stayed the same, it's that they came more or less the same and one went up and the other went down. One can argue whether the value of labor power has fallen. Rather, he is paid below the value of his labor power. Then, the separation becomes much more acute and the relationship of solidarity becomes much more difficult. If before they could more

[237] Association of Supervisors of the Metalworking Industry of the Argentine Republic.

or less look at each other and had something in common, now they have nothing *manifest* in common (they are still members of the working class).

Then, the material basis changed. I put it in more or less abstract terms, but it seems to me that it serves to clarify: in the *Grundrisse*, when Marx starts with development and speaks of three great stages in the development of human life, he says that there is a first way that starts from simply animal relations and becomes direct relations between people, of personal dependence. There is a second in which the relationship ceases to be personal and is objectified: it is a relationship through a thing. And this second creates the conditions for the third, which is the society based on the free association of individuals, the conscious organization of the process of social life. And he has a note where he refers to the role of the 2nd stage, and he says – not exactly like that, I put it perhaps a little exaggerated – which is to create a society of individuals with universal capacities and universal needs. And when one looked at the development of the capitalist mode of production up to the mid-1970s, with all the caveats (it is clear that the conditions of life in Haiti and England were not universal), but within each national sphere, one looked at the United States, a racist society, where it was in the 1960s that racial discrimination was called into question (not only as a production of consciousness, but also as a form of consciousness). but also of practical living conditions of not being able to get on the bus, etc.). So, it is "universal" put very much in quotation marks.

But one can say: it is a whole historical stage where the capitalist mode of production, in its immediate concrete form, with all its negation of movement *because it is* the capitalist mode of production, is advancing in the direction of its historical role. And from the last quarter of the twentieth century, this is what one clearly says: it is clear that progress is being made in the development of the productive forces, that from the point of view of the productive capacities for a part of the working class, there is still a transformation of these capacities, but universality is no longer immediately evident. If historically the concrete form could be roughly said to go in the direction of the content, from a certain point the concrete form has a movement that is the opposite of the content of the historical role of the capitalist mode of production. So, with that determination and something that I leave for when we see the centralization of capital, there is this change in the concrete form that the development of the productive forces in the capitalist mode of production takes with respect to the production of the labor force that it requires. And I also leave out (because we have already mentioned it, but we do not deploy it) the overpopulation of workers generated by capital.

There are two things I want to add in this, which applies especially to those higher up in the body of the collective worker, namely, that this individual is in charge not abstractly personifying the capital of the capitalist, but personifying the social relation of the other individual. And in a society where the social relationship has the form of a thing that you have or do not have in your pocket, and all relationships are antagonistic, every time that individual who manages the social relationship of the other, can put a part of it in his pocket... And that also adds to the difference. Marx has a passing comment in Volume 3 on the directors of enterprises. He begins to be an individual who appropriates the capital of the other

individual. And there appears a problem (I once saw a job but it was based on a quantitative differentiation and it is problematic): is it simply a worker or now it already has attributes...? Because the worker who produces less value than his labor power produces, the labor power is being paid with surplus value extracted from other individual workers who make up the same collective worker. But there appears to what extent, and with the forms of payment that are linked to becoming a minority partner (they never go beyond minority) for the capital for which they work, the individual appears to be the bearer of the contradiction that his own labor power is being sold.

Because he personifies a capital to which he sells his labor power and at the same time has to manage it purely as capital, he cannot see himself as a seller of labor power, and one of the things that appears (actually also appears later) with those forms of wages, which appear as wages but are part of becoming the owner of capital, They are the clauses that if you stay working for that capital, they will give you 1% of the shares which from the point of view of the individual is an immeasurable fortune. And one of the expressions of alienation is that when those individuals who have in their hands the management of an individual capital (with the degrees of centralization and concentration that capital has today), their useful life for capital ends and their natural life ends. Because his life has always been life for capital, and this situation appears of an individual who has the authority to manage a collective worker of thousands of individuals, and who can make decisions for that, and one day he finds that he is congratulated, given a prize, but they tell him: you are no longer good for this. And the individual finds that the reason for his life is over, because it was to manage that. If they don't die first because of the intensity of the work, they find that they have nothing to do. This is part of the production of that consciousness of this individual and of the antagonisms within even that same portion of the working class.

[Alejandro (Chat) mentions that since the fragmentation of the working class 50 years ago he has seen forms of utopian socialism expand and fewer and fewer organizations propose revolutionary action.]

I have an answer regarding my political action. And everyone has to give themselves an answer about their action, but I'll leave it for when we finish the workshop. But we can look at utopian socialism. But I wanted to propose this to you. I did it 20 years ago and I only updated it again very precariously, which is about the contrast between the working population... the first source of data I had was from 1820, and what has been happening to that working population in the case of the United States and England. And it was based on 30 years of life expectancy at birth, 2 years of schooling in the case of England, 2 also in the case of the United States, but because the white population had 3 and the slaves 0, then the proportion of the population gave 2.

And you see the development that Marx makes, and the quotes about the length of the working day in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the rough calculation was about 3600 h/year: 14-16h, 6 days a week, no holidays, no sick leave, no studies, nothing. And there is a turning point towards the mid-1970s but that continued with later development, and what one had was a working population with an average of 12 years of schooling (completed primary and

secondary school), and even the problem of having to count the educational level as the age went up. Because historically, when you start at 2 years old, you measure it with the population that is 12 or 14 years old. When the average has 12 years of schooling, at 12-14 years of age they are all in schooling. So, they have to go up the cut-off point to reach a general condition of complete schooling. I don't know if the US had 13.

The working day cannot be counted per day, because the daily working day has been shortened, but also the number of days worked in the year. The problems of competition between national processes of capital accumulation are notable because there were several statistics of hours worked, and the source of each statistic was that fewer hours were worked in their country than they were given to the sources of the others for that country. They all tried to show their workers that they worked less than the others. But the working day strictly in the year, to take a unit (they were factory plant workers), had been reduced to 1600h and in some cases 1400h/year. With which there was a reduction in the annual working day by at least half.

And one cannot measure the value of labor power (because it is clear that it is steadily declining as the productivity of labor falls), but what one could measure was the mass of use values that made up the hourly wage. And what happened was that this basket, in the case of the United States (more so at that time, because in England it goes up very quickly because a whole series of things that you had access to as a citizen disappear, and then they are incorporated into the salary), if I remember correctly around the year 2000 (for the factory workers the peak was 1974), The basket/h had multiplied by 18 times. With all the caveats that these measurements have, which are... But there are substantial differences for one to say that here there is a profound transformation in the conditions of production of the labor force.

The salary/hour had multiplied by 18, the basket, but since half the hours are worked, this meant by 9. We saw that the shortening of the working day is linked to a huge increase in the intensity of work. So, this thing that is multiplied by 9 because the working day was reduced by half, is not considering it, the multiplication is less than 9. And life expectancy at birth at that time was >70 years. So, that is what changed in that worker that one is looking at, the conditions of reproduction of his labor power. I looked at the workers of East Asia (China in 2000 was just strongly incorporated), and yes, the basket was less than that of the English worker in 1820, literacy was 2 years... They were the same conditions of the worker of 200 years ago. When one looked at the increase in the productivity of labor—which is much more relative, what that means, because that is not simply productive laborers, it is full of unproductive laborers, etc.—but one looked at what appears to be the relationship between the gross product and the number of workers employed, and that had multiplied—if I remember correctly—by 20 and a bit/h. Thus, with a basket that had increased by 18, the material product had increased by 20-odd, and the rate of surplus value had increased.

When I started teaching at the university at that time, I always proposed this, simply like this, that here is the proof that what governs the capitalist mode of

production is the increase in the rate of surplus value. Yes, the workers have all this now, but they are more exploited by capital than they were in 1820 because the rate of surplus value is higher. And the other calculation he made to show was that the number of hours/year was halved, but the number of years of work was doubled. From the worker who started working at 10-12 years old (or earlier) and died at 30 working, to the worker who started at 18 but continued working until he was 60 or older (at that time those were the retirement ages). It produces more surplus value for capital at a higher rate of surplus value than the other produced, and in the course of its life it produces a mass of surplus value for the larger capital.

I tried, with the analysis of crises and... To graph the evolution of labor productivity with respect to wages, its purchasing power, not value because it is immeasurable because the capacity of money to represent value changes, then the value of commodities changes, but if at the same time the value of gold or the gold that represents each sign of value changes, the fall in the value of labor power will not be reflected to me. We're going to add that for when we see the section that follows in *Capital*, the one about wages. If you have patience, because I have to do a somewhat complicated search, I found this thing that has to do with what we are talking about.



[...] Do you see the graph? This is very gross, we have to take it very carefully: it is not the value of labor power, it is the purchasing power of wages; it is not the productivity of labor strictly, it is the ratio between the material mass of *the whole* product and the total mass of *all* labor, productive and unproductive of value. This is from 1800 to 1974. What one finds is that there is a simultaneous evolution of the productivity of labor and of real wages. At some times productivity appears to be going up, at some times wages appear to be rising above productivity. And those dots are because they are census data, there are no continuous statistical series.

And if one looks at it, what appears is: suppose that this relation reflects the movement of the rate of surplus value (not in terms of value, it is expressed in how much of the material product the worker receives and how it grows in relation to the total material product), it would not have grown as much as one supposes it should have grown with the increase in the productivity of labor. So, my explanation of this – it has never occurred to me that this could be so, later I will

show why, for me it was always clear that the rate of surplus value had to grow very strongly – is something that appears in the development that Marx is making. And it is that there is such an increase in the intensity of work, and there is such a need for capital to have a worker who has productive attributes that are acquired with schooling, that the capitalists who incorporate technical innovation have their extraordinary surplus value, the most productive technique is generalized, and now the relative surplus value should appear. But what happens is that this new technique in a general way requires such an increase in the intensity of work and in the productive capacities of the worker, that it requires the consumption of more means of subsistence, which is sterilized from the point of view of the total capital of society. That when the disappearance of extraordinary surplus value has to be translated into relative surplus value, the shortening of the working day in hours and days of work, plus the need for workers to consume more use values to sustain that intensity of work and the type of work they are doing, capital was largely sterilized by the increase in the rate of surplus value.



And here what you have is what happens when you follow the series (it's until 2013, this must be even more frightening now). And there we see what was being hinted at before, which changes in the mid-1970s. First the real wage has a fall, then it has a small recovery, and meanwhile, the productivity of labor grows fiercely. And then, the total mass of material product made by the worker in relation to what he takes to consume, on the basis of differentiation and new production techniques, has opened up enormously, and here there must be a very strong increase in the rate of surplus value. And so, this makes this change that we were talking about.

And what is happening here [1974]? This is the pinnacle of the power of the industrial sector unions in the United States, which were mass unions. In England, the miners' unions had never been defeated in a strike, and they are defeated in the face of the Thatcher government. So, this differentiation necessarily takes the form of a profound loss of the political and trade union power of the working class, and the fragmentation and differentiation of the working class. Because when you look at the graph, it's quite possible that this isn't universal. That for one part of that mass of the working population the wage increase is greater, and for another the wage is below. But on average this comes out. I would like to return to this when we have come to a later chapter, not on the immediate conditions of the sale

of labour-power and its use by capital, but on questions relating to the movement of concentration and centralisation of capital.

[Alejandro asks about the rate of surplus value.]

Here I presented the synthesis, one has to look at all the changes that take place in the production processes, in the conditions of reproduction of the labor force. But out of the twenty-something he gave... wages were practically at the same level in the 70s. And the increase in productivity/hour worked jumps to thirty-something. And the working day is shortened in some places, in France the 7-hour day appears, and in the USA what appears is a crude differentiation: working hours that are extended... there is no longer a general shortening. But well, in any case, if it appears, we will return to this.

I have a work that is a chapter that came out in a book, which is uploaded to the CICP website and is in the form of an interview with me by a Peruvian named Óscar Martínez, which is linked – put in very general terms – to the changes in the materiality of work, in the mass political and trade union organizations of the working class. and the contrast between the way of confronting each other, of the knowledge of the general social relation, before and after the 1970s within Marxism in particular. How a whole series of proposals derived from Rubin arise, as an expression in the production of consciousness... that transformation of the materiality of the conditions of capital accumulation, which is reflected in the political organization of the working class, and which as an expression of that political organization takes forms of knowledge of the real movement that are markedly opposed to those that existed before, how they take that form. If I remember correctly, I changed the name for what is uploaded in the CICP[238].

We have come this far – and this is one of the things that we had considered here, beyond the development of Marx in *Capital*. I don't know if there is more to discuss about this or not.

Iván: A question arises for me, but perhaps it would be good to return to it in the next class, which is where we are going, what this trend poses to us going forward.

JIC: It may be... But I don't know if... because we would have to stop and look at it very carefully. And the question is where it is going, but we have not yet seen where the capitalist mode of production itself is going, so answering that can end up in something very immediate. The other possibility is to leave that for the end (if there is an end [Laughter]), for when we can look at all this that we were doing and what what we are seeing of the general movement implies with respect to the immediate concrete movement.

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[238][**Javiera** [Chat]: "From the negation of the materiality of abstract labor to the abstraction of free will by the new left, or from the transformation of the materiality of concrete labor to the political fragmentation of the working class."] Link: https://cicpint.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/JIC_2019_Cr%C3%ADtica-de-la-econom%C3%ADa-pol%C3%ADtica-sujeto-hist%C3%B3rico-y-destrucci%C3%B3n-del-capital-1.pdf

[Method I. Forms of representation]

There are two reasons why we should return to the method *now* and not at the end. The first is because the problem of what form scientific knowledge has in the capitalist mode of production appeared, and beyond the development that is in *Capital* we look at who is the subject of that knowledge. Marx makes a reference to what form this scientific knowledge takes, when he speaks of the reduction of all movement to a simple, mechanical movement, and what kind of scientific knowledge is needed for this.

The other question that may arise is why not at the beginning. What we are going to face is what form scientific knowledge has as an immediate proper form of the production of relative surplus value, because it is not simply in the abstract, but with this immediate purpose, and it is logical representation. And one has to ask why, what is the structure of the functioning of logical representation. Precisely, because of its structure, it has a whole body, it has a starting point that cannot be demonstrated, only to show that it is the starting point. Then it's easy, because it just says: the starting point is like this, like this and like this, and the one who doesn't like bad luck, but it's like that. So, one can structure from the outset an exposition on the method.

What we develop is a method that is the critique of that representation, the dialectical reproduction of the concrete, which, as such, cannot unfold its forms except on the concrete that it is reproducing. And then, trying to put the foundation of the method before doing the development, ends up being... I think I had raised it and we had experience of three workshops on the method many years ago, and the result ends up being: everyone has to reproduce this process for themselves, it is the only way to appropriate it. And so, there is no possibility that someone will explain, expose the thing, and that someone else will appropriate it on the basis of what the speaker told him. Ironically, I would end up saying, "Believe me, that's how it is." So, we're saying that you can only appropriate that method if you do it yourself, and then if you put it forward it's... since you are not reproducing it by yourself because the concrete object is not there, it is the opposite, it is accepting what I am saying just because. That's why I decided not to do any more workshops on the method, and that's why it can't be stated at the beginning. I have already told you about my differences with Luis Denari in this, where for him it was important to start with the exposition of the contrast of the method. For me, the contrast is made in the development, one cannot put it first.

Now, why at this point and not at the end? Because we've been deploying a concrete following that method. Therefore, we already have before us a deployment that we can now stop to recognize. And having recognized it at this point, in what follows, we can be, let's say, unfolding that reproduction, with knowledge of what is the way in which we are doing the unfolding, not simply following because I do it, but because you recognize what the meaning of that form of unfolding is. That is why I think the moment when a substantive part of the development is already done seems opportune, but before finishing it. And I hook it with what I raised at the beginning: even more so when the question of scientific knowledge, its subject, its form appears. […]

Alejandro: I get the point. The question of why not at first is clearer to me, because it would be proposing an abstraction with respect to the object and ends up turning the method into a theory of knowledge, and then when one wants to face the object, an exteriority appears.

JIC: There is no way to appropriate the method if one does not do the deployment. I have had experiences with people in particular from the Political Economy career at the General Sarmiento University, because with them is where I appeared... with enough time to be able to reach this point and raise it. And there have been people who have been satisfied that it was at this point, and people who got very angry with me saying that if I had brought this up to them from the beginning it would have been much easier for them. But it is implantable from the start.

The other experience with the workshops was this: we started by looking at what was happening with logical representation, and there were people who participated a lot and who were very hooked. They were workshops, except for one with those of the history career, which were not within the curriculum of any career. And there were people who were very involved until they were faced with these questions: what do we do in the face of these questions? And when we started with the other development, since we had to propose something of the incipient development of an object so that it could be followed, those people fled in fright, because it appeared as something that was forced. That's why it seems to me that the most appropriate place to put it is here. We were pointing out every time we were advancing: well, here this appears... And this from the point of view of a logical representation is unacceptable, or impossible to achieve. And yet, this is what is taking us forward. Let's start with the method and see what comes out (I'm kind of dispersed for reasons outside the workshop, but I try to make things flow as coherently as possible), and intervene and discuss. [...] Let's go to the axis of the thing.

When we start (not immediately but very early on), we look at the question of the knowledge placed with respect to the process of human life as a process of metabolism, the determination of the living being as a subject, and knowledge as the moment in which action is organized, as well as the expenditure of the body to virtually appropriate the potentiality that one has as a subject with respect to the potentiality that the environment offers to that subject. We emphasize that the action is underway, not separate from this limited expenditure of the body. And we looked at the properly human form of that knowledge, the product of the development of the productive forces of labor, which at the same time forms the productive forces of labor, is conscious knowledge: a knowledge that knows itself knowledge. Now, what we do not propose at that time are the ways in which that knowledge can "operate".

Since the first thing that the subject does with respect to his environment is to confront it with what it presents to him "immediately", human, conscious knowledge, and its development in the historical process, needs to start with a knowledge that takes the potentialities that the environment encloses as they are

immediately presented to the subject. So, the first form of conscious awareness... We return to differentiation with a knowledge that is not simply animal, but knows itself, that knows that what it is doing is organizing the action, it is taking the object of the action and taking the subject itself as it presents itself in the relationship in which they are confronted. And as they present themselves first of all is because of the externality of the object. So, what the subject does is *represent* his condition as a subject with respect to the environment.

And one can look at different scopes and modalities of representation, but what is known about the object is the immediate exteriority. In the development of this film you will see that there is a development of religious representation in particular, which appears with a whole development with respect to the human generic condition, but which I leave out. There's also something about artistic representation... The way in which this representation is governed appears to spring from a subjective condition, it does not pretend to be a purely objective appropriation of the potentialities that one has as a subject with respect to the potentialities of the environment. There is always an appropriation that has as its object to govern action, and insofar as it needs to govern action, it needs to have a *certain* objective character, but it seems that the capacity or possibility of that knowledge springs from subjectivity. In the case of religion, it appears that it is a matter of faith, it does not pretend to be objective: if the subject has faith, he knows in this way, and if not, he cannot. But there is always a content of objective knowledge, because what is going to govern is an action that has to face the object on which it is going to operate and needs to appropriate it to a greater or lesser extent in its objective attributes.

There is practical representation: we saw that manual work can only be learned by working. There is a process of knowledge, but that in the part that transcends what is the "capacity" within the individual. Their appropriation of the process is a knowledge that is based on representation: they show me how to hammer, and I learn to hammer by hammering, without knowing to what extent the force that I am applying on the head of the nail with the hammer exceeds the objective resistance offered by the wood that that nail penetrates, and so on. But what we saw with the development of large-scale industry and the substitution of manual work for machinery, is that the need for a *fully* objective knowledge appears (to put it that way), where the subjectivity of the individual who knows is no longer the basis, or the foundation of that knowledge, but that knowledge is objectively appropriating what we saw as natural forces. They are the objective potentialities that the object of work and the instrument of work have with respect to the objective potentialities that the human being has of being able to appropriate them, in such a way *as to objectify* this control of the natural forces in the machinery, and to cause them to be automatically discharged on the tool, and that the latter transforms the use value of the object of work.

Then, the need for a knowledge appears that can only be founded on the fact that the subject in his thought has appropriated the objective determination that is at stake. This is scientific knowledge. It is so objective that it can materialize separate from the subjectivity even of the individual who produces it, in contrast to

manual labor that is inseparable from the individual who is producing that knowledge that is only for himself, it cannot be appropriated by another.

Aristides: This is where I have a doubt. Previously you put what was the impossibility of transmitting, of starting with the method, as an *a priori*, as a question that depends on an individual subjective process. But at the same time now we are proposing what appears to me as the opposite.

JIC: Yes and no. In part, because I'm not being as coherent as I should be with the exhibition. What I planted is—and this applies to any objective method—: it can have an objectified existence, I have the book, but if I don't read it and appropriate what is proposed, I am not the bearer of that knowledge and I cannot organize my action by governing it with that knowledge. That's part of it.

On the other hand, I said that there is a method that has an existence of its own, it has a body, a structure that I can appropriate. And I contrasted it with a method that does not have that structure, and so I cannot appropriate its structure if I do not appropriate it on a concrete object that I am knowing. But with respect to the other that is at stake there, returning to the first, if *I* do not appropriate the potentialities that the object has, whether I appropriate it objectively in the fullness of the objective conditions, or whether I appropriate it as a matter of faith (because with faith I am appropriating it in some way, even if it is a potentiality that is not actually present in the body of the object)... But knowledge is always an individual process.

We said that consumption is always an individual process: if I do not appropriate the use value, I cannot consume. And the same thing happened with work: it is always a process of an individual nature, if I do not productively spend my body, I cannot produce. So, knowledge, if knowledge is not appropriate in my person, within my subjectivity, I have no way of governing my action through that knowledge. What we also saw when we looked at this double character of knowledge and consumption, is that one works with the means of production produced by others, one learns to work as a product of the labor of others, and we call this the social character of labor. And that when one consumes, one consumes the use values produced by others, and consumes in order to be in a position to produce again for others.

This is what one has in what you propose: if I did not *ideally appropriate* the potentialities that I have as a subject with respect to the potentialities of the object on which I am going to act, I do not know, I cannot govern my action by that knowledge, I will govern it with the knowledge I have. Now: that knowledge that I am going to have produced for myself is the product of the social labor of those who have operated in the process in which I produce my own knowledge.

What I can put into this (which is kind of premature, but maybe it might seem the other way around) is this difference: I can know because someone convinced me that this is so. And here comes religious knowledge: someone told me that this is so, and I accept it. So I have a knowledge that stopped at the appearance that the other individual had adequate knowledge to govern my action, and I know this

way. And in scientific knowledge, now we are going to look at... I made a reference to the starting point of logical, objective representation, where the starting point cannot be demonstrated, only shown and I accept that this is so. If I don't accept it, I can't develop that knowledge. So, I have to convince myself, or be convinced as a product of social labor, that this is the case, and from there it is possible to develop this objective knowledge. And what I am proposing is a form of knowledge that says that I cannot appropriate it because someone convinces me, because then, I stopped at the appearance that in reality that other individual knew a form of knowledge that says that I cannot appropriate it through knowledge, but convinced by the knowledge of another. I can only appropriate it by following the same path that the other did and subjecting what he did to criticism. So, what one has in front of one are different ways of appropriating the form that the process of knowledge has, which is the method that each knowledge has. They can convince me with blows, but no one can get me to go through the same process of knowledge that the other did, on the contrary, if he starts hitting me I say yes so that he stops hitting me.

The last thing. When I said that it can be objectified, I was referring to this: one can say that verbal discourse is an objectification of the thought of the individual who is speaking, but it is an objectification that lasts as long as the individual is speaking. And in many aspects of practical knowledge, it is enough for this scope of objectification of a knowledge that is transmitted for another to appropriate it. But when one speaks of objective knowledge that has to transcend the most immediate appearance, that knowledge has such a complexity that its oral objectification is not enough. And as human knowledge develops because the process of social metabolism becomes more complex, what appears is the need to objectify the thought of an individual so that others can appropriate it. And it starts from cave paintings to written language, which is the fullest expression – at least so far – of the objectification of an individual's knowledge so that another individual can appropriate it. Now: the individual can appropriate it because he reads it and says: "Ah, of course, this is so because I am convinced that this is so", or I can subject it to criticism: he says that this must be done, this... Well, I'm going to do the same path: do I find the same path or not? It is another way of appropriating that knowledge.

Aristides: Yes, that ordered me a lot, but I still have this. What happens, let's say, in a university environment, the political struggle, the academic struggle...? Let's say that I form a group and summon you to set up a lecture on the reading of *Capital* in the university environment: am I not also operating (I may or may not succeed) in the subjectivities of the future sociologists, of the working class? Am I not generating an impact on these individual processes of knowledge in the confrontation with this objectified knowledge? I say this because of a question that remained with me from the previous meeting: where does the work come from...? Well, your work, but I am referring to all the objectified knowledge, a little of what we are doing here humbly in our individual processes. Where does all that come from?

JIC: I'm going to give a short answer, and then I'll give you... Actually, I should have sent it earlier, some of you think already know it. It is a text originally developed for internal consumption of the CICP by discussions that had appeared,

which is called, I think, "On the form of political action of the CICP", where this is. The other text is called "On the Forms of My Criticism" which also came from some internal discussion. But this other one is, what is being done at the university... [...]. But the other aspect in general of what you were proposing is the task of the teaching worker: the objective of his action is to operate on the consciousness of the students, whether he likes it or not, whether he wants it or not, it is what any teacher does at any level. Because its object of work is the student's conscience and will. Now: one can face that in two ways: I am going to convince him that this is so, or I am going to make him have to face answering for himself whether this is so or not.

I stayed out of university teaching for a long time (at one time I couldn't even set foot because there was the military dictatorship, but later), because one of my issues was that I was going to operate in the process in which these other members of the working class produce their consciousness, in something that requires a long and complex process to appropriate it. and I have a semester to do that operation. What is the point? In that text there is a discussion with an Argentine Marxist who was very respectable for his production and for his personal attitude, who was Horacio Ciafardini. We argued several times because his point of view was the opposite of mine and there I put what we discussed and the "synthesis" in some way, why he had decided to do it anyway. Where I always clarify that among the things that mediated was the sale of my labor power, it is not simply a problem in the abstract. So, one is always operating on the process in which other individuals produce their own subjectivity, and the teaching task is that, that is its content.

So, one of the discussions (that's in another work: "Economists for what?"), which is that one is always... You raised the question of sociology, and a version adapted for sociology had come out, but we have already seen the total capital of society, and when one studies what appears within the "social sciences" (political economy, sociology, political science...), one does not study it to operate in the movement simply of an individual capital, but in the movement of the total capital of society or of an individual capital but with respect to the total capital of society. society. And when we look at the movement of the total capital of society and the state as its political representative, one is operating in the process in which students produce their consciousness as political subjects, and therefore one is acting as a political subject: it is inseparable. That applies to all educational processes, but in the social sciences it is crudely seen that what one is doing is operating in that process.

The problem that returns is this: who is the subject of this production? It is not the teacher, it is the student, he is producing for himself his consciousness as a political subject. But one is operating in that process. This is a product of social labor, it is the role it plays in the process of producing consciousness. And then one can try to convince the student that in reality when he is in the classroom he is a scientist who is objectively studying the movement of the life of society, or one can confront the student with asking himself what he is doing in this process of forming his consciousness and how he objectively knows what is happening in that process of social life. That's what you always have in front of you.

Iván: I have a question that you have already partially answered, which is about the form of religious knowledge, which you had not exposed much. What makes me angry is understanding religion as a form of knowledge. What I see is that it is based on an appearance, like the Sun rises in the east and sets in the west, and it appears as if the Sun revolves around the Earth that is in the center; or it appears as mysticism, for example in Egypt where medicine had advanced treating war wounds, because it was seen that they were produced by human action, but when diseases appeared they thought they were curses, and they treated them with a horrible concoction to try to get rid of that "demon" they had in their bodies. And then there is a form of knowledge that tries to understand the social, but that appears as a commandment, as a way of justifying a certain social order: in pre-capitalist societies, the ruling class or the king as the representative of God on earth. So, in some cases they remain in an appearance and in others false ideas about the world are constructed, so it is not a simple stop, I see it as the opposite of knowing: they stop at the dogma of faith, but the problem of knowing is to transform the world, they stop at an ideological construction.

JIC: That *it is a way of knowing*. Because the purpose of that knowledge is to organize action, on the basis of that. To one more thing: in the first place, in religious representation, there is no *element* that is not real, because in human thought there is no element that has not arisen from the immediate experience of the subject with respect to his environment. Then, a character appears who has wings, but the wings were removed from the bird. The example that I always liked is this bug that has the claws of the eagle, the head of a lion and the body of I don't know what... They are all real elements put into a fantastic relationship.

Now, why is this fantastic relationship needed? That fantastic relationship is the way to govern the life process of that society. Precisely because of the limited development of the productive forces of human labor, it confronts its own potentialities with respect to the environment as something that it cannot control. And then, he is represented in forms that allow him to appropriate what he cannot control. You took Egypt, but universally religions, at a stage of certain social forms, the Sun is the fullness of power, but not only in what appears as the universe, but in immediate society. So there is an identification of the one who appears as the full representative of power with that "natural" phenomenon, because it is clear that one is subject to that natural phenomenon. So, this is a representation. Appropriating the image of an animal... I don't appropriate the image of the cockroach, I appropriate that of the lion, because then I'm going to have its strength.

And the other question that appears with religion is a point at which human subjects begin to appropriate their condition as generic beings, only that this appropriation of the condition of being generic appears as an alien, alienated condition. One has to look at this: the limited natural life span of living individuals is the way in which the species' ability to appropriate the environment develops. If the human being had an indefinite individual life, in the first place he would not be a human being, he would be a Cro-Magnon (let's stay close in the story). The limited individual life is what causes a body to be generated that has attributes that

the previous body does not have. In the human being this is particularly evident in the development of the brain, which is the organ for the exercise of consciousness and will. Thus, religious consciousness is the first manifestation of an awareness of the condition of being generic. Only the generic being is placed outside the process of human life itself. In the process of human life I am a limited individual, subject to all the vicissitudes that do not transcend my individuality. And in religion this is alienated: when I die, I will be with the divinity, which is the bearer of the generic being, I will have an eternal life, instead of being able to recognize that the form of my eternal life is because I am a generic being, in my limited individual life.

So, the question of recognizing myself as that generic being, not seeing it as something that is alien to me, is the development of that consciousness: the passage from religious consciousness to a consciousness of an objective character. Now I know that *I am a generic being*, not because when I die I will begin to be one and I will have eternal life: what I have is that, as a human race, I have a life (as long as the conditions for human life last). This is what we looked at at the beginning as well. We are historical subjects because each human generation is the product of the work of the previous generation, it encounters a world transformed by previous conscious and voluntary human action, and therefore the human being is the subject of his own history. This is what is at stake.

Then, it is clear that religion is an apparent, ideological, non-objective knowledge, moreover, when the historical moment has arrived in which objective knowledge can exist as such. Now: religion also has objective content, what happens is that with historical development it becomes purely ideological content. But when the Egyptians with their worship of Ra, or the Mayans make their calendar, they see it as an expression of divinity, but they make a calendar that objectively measures when to sow, to harvest, how to water... It has that content. And in what you were saying... For the wounded of war, there may be an immediacy that manifests itself – this guy is cut: the cut must be repaired – now: the disease to which you referred, you have to know far beyond the immediate manifestation that the individual was hit in the head with an axe. And I didn't have that ability.

So, the way to face what I didn't have the capacity to do is to say... well, miracle. We give you this... Part of that had to have objective knowledge, things that operated in the organism of the sick individual. Then that continues to advance in the development of primitive medicinal things, it is knowledge that is developed and that is the origin after scientific knowledge, which when it is already developed one says: well, that one stopped at appearance, he did not know why the concoction I gave him cured him, but now I can explain why that priest and that other one does not cure, I don't have to make it a fantastic problem of how the gods are going to operate on this individual. So, historically, it is an alienated knowledge, because the generic being is placed in something that is outside the human being. It is not alienated in the commodity by any means, but it is: I see myself as a generic being and I cannot recognize myself in my individuality, and the only way I can recognize myself is by putting it as something that is above me: divinity.

Alejandro: [...] The question I wanted to ask is about the development of the consciousness of the human being, how his vital activity has this generic attribute that is to be governed by work. How does it appear in the development of the immediate ancestor? As a matter of a debate with a teacher, who suggested to me that consciousness was not in the human body, but that it was something immaterial, and it shocked me, I began to read Engels, *The Role of Work in the Transformation of the Ape into Man*. And there was this mention that in the evolution of the life of a human subject the entire evolution of the human being is synthesized, this passage from the hominid ancestor to what is properly human. The question about consciousness in the infant arises [...]. I am not so clear at what point an individual subject begins to advance in knowledge on his own. Moreover, I tend to think (perhaps it is an appearance) that when the baby becomes more of an infant than a baby, that consciousness does not appear so clear, and then one does not operate on its process of knowledge but is *determining* its own consciousness.

JIC: What we asked ourselves was: we looked at the "incipient" human being going back two or three million years. One cannot say: until now he was an ape, and from here he is a human being. The very development of consciousness... I don't know if we talked about it here the other time.

Iván: No, it was in the workshop on "Economic and Legal Relations".

JIC: [...] So, what we propose is that the human being is differentiated from the animal species by the capacity he has to appropriate the environment, and the multiplication of the productive forces of human labor is sustained in the production of means of production. The more mediation there is from the starting point of labor (the productive expenditure of the body) to the point where there is a use-value that a human body reproduces, the more "farther," so to speak, human knowledge, the capacity to govern that action, has to reach. Therefore, the development of the productive forces leads to the development of the capacity for human knowledge.

When one looks at the origin of the human being, it is an animal knowledge and at the same time it is no longer simply an animal knowledge, because it is an animal that has a capacity for knowledge specifically of its own. And that carries with it that capacity for knowledge. Because again: one does not only know consciously. In a short time, the stomach of those who have not eaten yet will begin to say that it knows that it lacks food, and that is simply animal knowledge. Forms of simply animal knowledge do not disappear, but they develop and take on specifically human forms, and some in order to develop as proper to the human being lose the scope that animal knowledge had. That is why we propose that there comes a time when, in order to organize action, the result of the action is so far in time, in all the intermediate processes, between the individual who is the bearer of the last step in the process of production of a use value that reproduces a human body, and the starting point. that this knowledge begins to have to know itself as a process that knows that it is organizing action, conscious, that knows that it is knowing.

What is the point at which the human being...? One can argue that human work differs from any animal productive activity not simply because of the scale, the scope with which it is capable of transforming the environment, but because it is organized by a knowledge that is different from any animal knowledge, it is a moment that... One can see milestones in development, but it is clear that it appears much later than the beginning of that development. When one looks at alphabetic writing, it says that there is a milestone here, because it implies that the complexity of this process of human life, of social metabolism, is such that it can only be organized when the knowledge of an individual transcends the possibility, the scope of having a verbal objectified existence and has to have an objectified existence that transcends the presence of the individual. But one goes back, to the cave paintings, it is clear that there is a knowledge that is very far from a simply animal knowledge, and it is of a subject who is trying to represent himself with respect to the environment in which he has to operate. Which means that he is recognizing himself as a subject who knows.

And one goes backwards in the development of human knowledge and cannot say: "Here consciousness appeared": there are different scopes of consciousness. Religious consciousness is one, scientific consciousness is another, it is not that one is conscience and the other denial of conscience. One has stopped before a form of the human life process and the other continued to ask himself why there was content beyond that form and it was answered that the content is this and not that one. They are concrete forms – because they also operate on the concrete conditions of production – but it is not that there is a consciousness and the rest is a negation of consciousness. They are ways in which the human being as a generic being has been recognizing himself in his condition as a subject.

So, Alejandro, you would have to know the modern studies on that. I don't know, except that I have experienced two processes of generation of human beings who went from their simply animal condition to conscious and voluntary subjects, and I no longer remember well at what moment they did what. But what one does have to consider is that today's human being is born with attributes in his subjectivity that the human being of a million years ago did not have. The capacity to produce by himself his consciousness, a conscious knowledge, is much greater. Because, among other things, he has a brain in a position to make that advance, even if no one considers it... It is impossible for an individual not to be a product of social labor (the opposite is a fantasy, what Marx called a "robinsonada"). So, it will develop the potentiality that it brings different from the human being of a million years ago, on the basis that biologically it has a capacity that the other did not have, and it will be the product of social labor that has a capacity that the other did not have. There is a process in which one cannot say that consciousness was born at such a point. When one thinks of the mastery of fire, it already contains a conscious and voluntary action, it is not simply animal: it requires a capacity to know that by doing this, one is going to reach this result that is mediated by the action of rubbing pebbles, or sticks or whatever.

Leonardo: With this discussion of consciousness, this question arises about Alfred Sohn-Rethel's work on intellectual and manual labor. The argument (I'm going to insult it a lot because I haven't read it for a long time) came to say that

scientific and mathematical consciousness, for example geometry... He posits a homology between the rules of exchange and what happens in Greece with the generalization of currency to a certain extent. And that the first mathematician was also a lawyer —Thales of Miletus—. And that in itself, exchange poses a mental abstraction, and that the metaphysical properties and presuppositions, of points and lines, come from the conditions in which one has to assume that, for example, in order to exchange oranges for wood there is something homogeneous that one has to abstract. Since I don't yet have the second edition of *Knowing Capital Today*, I wanted to ask what your criticism of Sohn-Rethel was.

And then, on the question of education, there is a book by a "Marxist" historian and mathematician who makes a history of pedagogy, mathematics and the role of abstraction and representation, and talks about how symbols as mechanisms of abstraction are becoming a necessity for the development of a society. I'll leave it there because if not...

JIC: About Sohn-Rethel, I would tell you to get my book [Laughs]. It makes a reversal of the determination of consciousness quite ... But it is long, the approach is developed in the book. He believes that abstract labor springs from change, rather than seeing change as an expression that what is being equalized are quantities of work, because it is done privately and independently. So it puts this abstraction thing on its head turning determination.

Regarding... It is clear that human thought, the capacity to know consciously, is developing, and among the expressions of development is that it can advance more and more in what it abstracts from what is immediately in front of it. Where in particular do forms of mathematical knowledge originate? Especially in those societies where life is only possible through large-scale irrigation. There it is essential to be able to quantify what time of year it is, what flow the river is going to have, the cases of flooding, what resistance the material that is going to channel the water has to have with respect to the force of the water. And it is born as a religious knowledge, attributes of divinity. And then, when the ability to govern that goes much further, it appears as strictly mathematical knowledge.

Ivan: When we look at religious consciousness and scientific, logical consciousness, they appear as two different forms of consciousness. But it also happens that there are individuals who have a developed scientific consciousness, who in their concrete labor apply formal logic, or scientific knowledge and productive attributes for their work, but then in the rest of their ways of understanding society and other individuals, they do not use that type of scientific knowledge but seek it in forms of religious knowledge "à la carte". such as the tarot, past lives, etc. What is the need that begins to appear for these two forms of consciousness in individuals?

JIC: It is somewhat premature because they have a double condition. Part of it comes from the very form of scientific knowledge, but we have to get to that when we move forward. But the other question is: let us never forget that we are free individuals because we are alienated in capital. And, therefore, that we are confronted with our own generic powers, our condition as historical subjects, as

something that is alien to us. And one can take that as a manifestation that carries over from previous forms of alienation, or it is a manifestation of the alienation proper to the capitalist mode of production, only that it is placed in a "letter" instead of being placed in the objectified social relation.

Not being able to recognize oneself in one's own determinations because one is a free individual because one is alienated, has as a necessary form that one needs to face one's own potentialities as potentialities that come from outside one's own subjectivity. And that at the same time they have the character in these things, in something... You said that "it's a la carte", there is something that this lacks determination. And that one can think that it is typical of an individual who needs to look at himself as free, who at the same time cannot do so because he is alienated, and then puts pure chance in the place of causality, who wants to believe that his determination is devoid of determination. Because religious alienation is not devoid of determination, but says that I am determined by this divinity in such and such a way, and I have a command as to what I should do because this is so. In this other case, it sounds more like: I refuse to accept that I have a determination, and the only way I can accept my determination is for it to seem alien to any determination. But I don't know if it's simply that, it's an answer that came up at the time.

Alejandro: I was going to ask a similar question because I have worked side by side with engineers, biotechnologists, and what Iván mentions is clear. They see determinations in their object of work, but not in their own subjectivity. Then, in whatever form, the naturalization that they are free individuals appears. And they end up resorting to these questions, for example astrology. And there is also a determination that is a long way from being reached, but this need to be 12 hours in front of the computer, and at some point he needs to abstract himself from everything that immediately appears in his working life, and arrives on Friday night and consumes certain narcotics, and advances in that abstraction. And in the same way he consumes this type of theories that present him to his subjectivity that is indeterminate. For me, there are still intermediate steps to get there, but it is present from the beginning of the scientific method itself, to see objectivity as something alien to subjectivity.

JIC: We're going to get to that. Let's move forward a... I don't remember where I was aiming anymore.

Iván: You had mentioned religious, artistic and practical consciousness in passing, you said 2 lines of "*logical-formal*" consciousness and that's as far as you went.

JIC: Yes, the need for a representation that does not appear to be based on the subjectivity of the individual who knows, but that appears to be based on objectivity with respect to what is being faced.

The idea was, as a next step, to confront this form of representation. A representation that is going to be based on the fact that what I have in front of me is the objective, it is not set by me, it is how I am confronted by this object that I

have to appropriate. And it is a representation because it is precisely how the object is presented to me, and I am going to present it again in thought. And when one looks at what is going to develop as *logical representation*, the starting point for objectivity is to say: here, in the object, there is no content other than its form, than that which is presented to me. And consequently, I have to relate the multiplicity of forms that I have in front of me on the basis of...

The organization of action consists in relating these objects to my condition as a subject, and I will do so on the basis of how these things confront me in their present existence. And consequently, this confronts me as a present existence, something that is immediately affirming itself in what it is, and consequently, it cannot have within it something that is not immediately manifest. It cannot have a potency that is different from its immediate manifestation. I need to appropriate this by representing it to myself as if it were the product of a simple immediate affirmation, it has no other need than to present itself. How then am I to recognize its necessity, to appropriate ideally the necessity that this diversity of concrete forms contains? I myself, insofar as I am an object that is going to act as a subject, where am I going to recognize its necessity?

I can only recognize her in the demonstration. And for this, the expression that this need has, is: I look at all forms, which are more or less similar, and I see what in their manifestation is always present and what is sometimes present in them and sometimes not, and I am going to say that what is always present is the attribute that makes this thing what it is. And then I am going to represent that attribute that is repeated as the concept that I have of this thing, in the construction in thought. And I'm going to do that with all the different objects that I have to face, and I'm going to look at each one of them what is always repeated, and that's the "essential" thing about it (I have trouble using this term, because here there is no essence other than the form). And on that basis I will have represented each object in what appears to me as its most universal determination.

The next step is to relate these different objects, to relate myself in my action to these different objects. I have to know whether or not the tool will be able to operate on this object, etc. I separated them, eliminated the attributes that were not repeated, and now I have to put them in relation. And as I said, here there is no necessity other than that which is externalized in the very existence of the object. I cannot say that these concepts that I am constructing are going to set themselves in motion, because if not, I would be saying that here there was a content that was not immediately the one that was manifested in the form, that there was a potentiality that was not expressed as realized in the form. So, in order to be coherent with this development, I have to superimpose on all these inert objects that I have built in my thought a relationship outside of them that links them. But this relationship cannot be fantastic, it has to be objective, otherwise it would do the same as religious representation, which also separates by appearance and puts them in a fantastic coherence. So, I have to build a structure of objective necessity to be able to link these things that are not capable of linking by themselves. And that structure is logic. But then I have to found the logic, start by saying what the structure of this is going to be.

To do this, I have to start by saying that there is nothing here that is not simply identical to how it is presented. But when I face things, I see that they contain potentialities, they are not simply inert things. So, I have to turn them in my representation into inert things, starting from saying that nothing can transcend itself, nothing can be affirmed by denying itself as what it is. All movement has to come from outside. And this necessity of representation appears as the principle of identity: $a = a$. That is to say, *a* cannot transcend itself, because beyond all that is *a*, it cannot become something else; when it comes to its end, it cannot be anything other than what it is. To complement this principle, I have to say that it cannot be at the same time what it is, and not be what it is. So I have that contradiction is inadmissible, it is the principle of non-contradiction: ¬(a^¬a), it cannot be at the same time affirming and negating itself, which would be not being what it is.

And to show that all need is exhausted in these first two principles, I have to say that there is no other need: it is this or it is not this, but it cannot be a third thing. Before Leonardo jumps in and talks to me about fuzzy logic and modal logic... What modal logic says is: it can be this, this, or that, but what it cannot be is to be this because it is that. And then it is the formal extension of the principle of the excluded third: it is this immediate affirmation, or this, or this, but it cannot be this immediate affirmation and at the same time this other, or it cannot be—and this is the substance—this immediate affirmation because it is this other immediate affirmation. I'm going to put it, as a result of what we talked about at the beginning, why until this point.

When we start, at a certain height we reach free consciousness. And what was it? It is the form of alienated consciousness. What I am saying is that alienated consciousness asserts itself through its own negation, and yet what we saw is that the content of free consciousness in the capitalist mode of production is alienated consciousness. And this is what is inadmissible from the point of view of a logical representation: it cannot be because it is the opposite. And this is going to be projected in what is called dialectical materialist logic where there is no way to be able to give body to that representation. […]

Those three that I enunciated are the principles of logic. You can't prove it to him, no one can show me that something is and can't contain a power that is the opposite of what he's manifesting to me. To the point that in vulgar knowledge there is the expression that "appearances deceive", and it is saying that the content does not manifest itself identical to itself in form, which is the opposite of the content. So, logical principles must be believed as a matter of *objective* faith.

They can show them to me and I accept them as a starting point, but they can't show them to me. So, we begin with a construction of a representation that will advance on the relationship between concrete forms, which begins by not being able to objectively lay the foundation of itself. It is based on my accepting those principles, which are kicked with the real concrete movement. And so one has to go through a long process of learning, which at one time included learning logic for its own sake, until one becomes convinced that in reality the only way to know objectively is a knowledge that confronts the concrete forms on which I have to operate as what is obviously contrary to what they are. He is telling me that

nothing can have a content that is not immediately equal to form, and if I were to go through the practical world believing this, I would crash violently; At the very least, I would be a victim of all scammers because I would take the content of what they are telling me is identical to what they are proposing.

So, we have this form of knowledge, which we are going to see next time what powers it has, because it is clear that it has them. One sees in the immediate manifestation that this form of knowledge revolutionizes... We saw that the capitalist mode of production needs to continually develop the productive forces of labor governed by the form which at the same time entails the negation of this development, and it bases itself on this science to do so. So, it is clear that this knowledge allows objectively to dominate the natural forces, to objectify that control in the machinery, to make it operate, etc. But we have to see why it needs to start from this kicking with immediate knowledge, from the immediate action of human consciousness.

[Method II. The logical representation]

Alejandro: I wanted to ask about how formal logic proceeds, and if there are any or several authors who are the greatest exponents of formal logic as a methodological approach, or if it is a procedure that science in general takes and does not ask about that process. I don't know if I understand myself.

JIC: One can go back to Aristotle, because it has a large part of the foundations, one can even say that the body of formal logic. And then there have been modifications, additions, developments, which one can ask why they are happening in the different historical moments. And there is a stage where all the formalization appears, all the symbolic logic very strong; There is a whole school that raises this, which some are now questioning and it has the name of... It's not about logistics, but something like that[239]. There are lots of texts. In general, logicians do not call it "formal logic", for them it is logic. An example: *Elements of theoretical logic* (Hilbert, money. and Ackermann, W.); there is one called *Mathematical Logic*; there is a dictionary by Ferrater Mora in two volumes where he deals with the history of logic, the different approaches, concepts, syllogisms...

I think I made a mention last time to what appears as "materialist dialectical logic" and I didn't dwell long. One has to differentiate, because if one says "dialectical logic", if you like, it is that of Hegel. His book is called *Science of Logic*, which deals with dialectics, and the whole development of that book is divided into 3 parts, each chapter with 3 parts, etc. It is that, first I face the thing (formal knowledge), then comes the knowledge of the content, and then why the content has the form with which it was started. But put as a construction of thought, as a course that thought gives itself.

In the face of this, the proposals of "dialectical materialism" appear, so one can say "materialist logic". And there are going to appear proposals that appear as the "laws", but if I want to deploy a reasoning... Formal logic tells me how I have to reason. And they give me statements of things but they don't tell me how to deploy that reasoning. There is the law of the interpenetration of opposites, of the transformation of quality into quantity... but they don't tell me how I have to do to be able to face the concrete in front of me. I think I mentioned a book by Joja, who is a guy who tries to transform those approaches that... Lenin speaks of the "elasticity" of concepts. What does that mean? Joja tries to transform these proposals into laws of what he is going to call dialectical logic. Then, he starts: if formal logic has the principle of non-contradiction, it has the "contradictory complex predicate." And then it has the equivalent of the principle of identity and the excluded third. But it gets to a point where it says: but in order to do this, one has to start from a concept that is... of a simple statement, which means: the predicate is the predicate. That I can later put the contradictory complex predicate, but the contradictory *is* contradictory. And I cannot have a contradiction in the starting point because if not, the whole logical structure collapses. For me he is the author who most tried to build a logical structure that aimed to be dialectical, and he goes so deep that he ends up falling into the situation that his entire

[239] Logicist/logicism?

construction has to be based on the principle of identity, he cannot escape that condition to put together a structure of thought.

For me, in general, books on dialectical logic are very valuable... There I have one by Lefebvre, who was considered the authority of an era in this area, and who goes round and round and nowhere does he say how this form of reasoning is structured. And there are others like Woods and another Alan... which are more current, and that in the face of the traditional problem of whether the atom is a corpuscle or a wave, ends up being a problem of percentages: it can be 30% wave, 70% particle. So, one applies that to free consciousness as a form of alienated consciousness and one can say that in the capitalist mode of production it is 20% free and 80% alienated and that it will advance until it is 80% free and 20% alienated. That construction does not mean anything. […]

Marx has a very strong critique... He has a whole series of discussions with Proudhon about logic and the construction that is not logical, in the sense that logic is an external necessity that is placed on the object that one wants to know, in the *Poverty of Philosophy*. What he says is: Hegel has nothing but logic, and Proudhon has more than Hegel because he tries to confront real motion, but what he does is (I am going to put it in very concise terms) that, when real motion shows him things he does not like, he makes a leap to an ideal structuring of the relations between the forms he is looking at. And when he doesn't like that logical relationship, then he returns to what he believes to be the actual development of the contradiction. And then he concludes by saying: Hegel had no problem because he only had logic. What problem does Proudhon have? Does he show the development of the real contradiction as he understands it? Does it show the development of the categories following the structure of logic? No. What it shows is the history of its own contradictions, the clash between a representation that starts with a necessity that is external to the object, and a process of reproduction of that object in thought. If the object has powers that one can accompany in its development ideally, then it does not need an external constructive necessity. If one considers that one needs it, one starts from the fact that things do not contain any power to be realized other than that which is immediately manifested in the form in which they are realized. I don't know if this helped, Alejandro, if it pointed to your concern.

Alejandro: Yes. I had been wondering how the necessity of the thing appears in logic externally. He had taken up Aristotle, Descartes and Hume, and returning to part of the *Anti-Dühring*, in which this cause-effect relationship appears, where it does not appear as a determination immanent to the object but ends up proposing that it is a thing that moves another that has no movement of its own, an external thing has to come to move it. In Hume it is quite clear. It was also in Aristotle, although it may have a greater complexity because of what he said about potency and act, but when potency appears in the act there is a substantial change, then it would not correspond. I still took note of the authors you mentioned.

JIC: In the chapter on the method, I think some of these proposals are discussed.

What we had was that in representation, as one starts from how the object is presented to the subject, how the subject presents itself as an object, what we have is that objectivity is based precisely on presenting oneself, on the repetition of that presentation. In the process of representing the determinations of the object, what is done is to start from the immediacy of that object and analyze it in a process in which those features that are repeated are separated from those that are not. So a representation is constructed in which the object is abstracted from features that are not repeated, until it reaches the point where it is considered that it has the "substantial" determination (it is not accepted that there is a substance and a form), and then it has the concept with respect to that object. You do that with more objects, and so on.

And one must not forget that this is the process of organizing action. Therefore, the subject will have to operate, not on an object that is emptied of things that were not repeated, but on an object that has all the characteristics that are repeated and those that are not. Consequently, completing this analysis of abstraction of attributes, one now has the representation of the object abstracted from these particular aspects, and one must re-represent the object with all the particular conditions that appear. So, we have to start a process of establishing a relationship between the different concepts. But since concepts are built on the basis that there is nothing that is not immediately present in manifestation, within the concept there is no necessity that can unfold by itself. The concept is empty of necessity because the necessity is already all realized there in what is manifested. So, we have to relate these different concepts. And it is necessary to impose externally on them a constructive necessity that represents what was the starting point that the objective is what is manifested and nothing can be anything different from what is manifested or that confronts representation. Then the need arises to found this structure of logical necessity. But in order to found it, one cannot start from what was confronted in real motion, because in real motion, one was confronted with the fact that objects contain powers that are not immediately identical with their manifestation.

Last time I forgot to refer to several times (as far as I remember, three) where Marx makes this observation: if the content manifested itself identical to itself in form, then there would be no need for scientific knowledge, it would be enough to look at what one has in front of one and one would realize what it is. The problem is that the phenomenon is not identical to the content, and that is the reason why scientific knowledge exists. There is some irony out there where it says that economic science is the only science that ignores this, but in reality it is universal for science in the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, it is not possible to justify why we are working on the basis of maintaining that there is no other content than immediately the form.

That is why the logical principles that are going to give the starting representation of the construction can only be "shown", they cannot be demonstrated. Believe or bust: if one disputes the principle of identity, one cannot do the construction. We have to accept it. The same with the principle of non-contradiction and of excluded third party. And that is why it is the starting point of the whole unfolding of relations that are necessarily going to be tautological,

because since nothing can transcend itself, nothing can be different from what it is. All logical constructions—and this is proposed by the theorists of logic—are tautological. The problem with logic is that something is enunciated, and in that statement there is already the relation. What happens is that you can't see it, and then you have to unfold the logical relationship, now you have to deduce it from the principles, to make visible what was already there at the start, and there can never be something that wasn't there at the start. So, there is this logical necessity, and now these concepts begin to be put in external relation to each other.

The way in which this relationship is presented externally is that now those that were seen as "supposed simplifiers" are going to begin to be raised. And progress is made in this survey of concepts that are going to be related, until a representation of the specific object on which action is going to be taken is completed. And so, you have this knowledge, and the action has been organized on this basis and is ready to act no longer ideally, but *really* on the object, and you act. Knowledge is always the organization of action, the individual who is knowing is always in the process of triggering his action. And knowledge is always knowledge of the object with respect to one's own subjectivity, therefore it is the knowledge of one's own subjectivity. But what about this logical representation (which we will assume has been made consistently, with the tautological character that corresponds to it) and its operation as an organizer of action?

Representation is based on separating what is repeated from what is not. And what is repeated, has only been able to be faced because it was already done. And the problem, the contradiction that appears, is that the action will always act on the powers of the object and the subject that are about to be realized. Once the action is done, knowledge no longer plays any role in that organization. And the problem we have here is that the organization of a future action can only be based – in this form of representation – on the knowledge of the manifestations that that action has had in the past, the manifestation of the relations that exist between objects in the past. And then, what appears is the problem of... Well, yes: until the past this was repeated like this, but who says that in this action that is going to be unleashed, this is going to be repeated in the same way and always?

I am going to give an absolutely grotesque example, but rigorous. I know that the Sun rises every morning, because I always saw it rise. Now: I don't know if tomorrow it will come out or not. I think that the same thing that has been repeated is going to be repeated, but logically I can't prove that it will come out tomorrow. I have knowledge that will help me to act, but that does not meet the criteria of logical coherence. Logically, I have to refrain from saying what is going to happen tomorrow. The example I give is grotesque, but in the concrete forms of action that one can more or less quickly look at, it is a situation that is always present. Until yesterday I could speak, I don't know if in three minutes I won't have a stroke and I won't be able to speak. And then I say, "I'm a talking individual." And yes, so far I have always been able to do this, but I don't know if next time I will be able to do it or not.

And then there is this problem of repetition in the first place. So what appears to me is the problem of whether or not I acted with knowledge of the facts. That it is a

late problem, because I have already acted. And how does the logical representation say that I have to recognize whether I had knowledge or not? I have to take the result that manifests itself from my action and compare it – because it is only external – I have to see it in a process of comparison. If, when I do it, I can analyze the result of my action against what I had constructed, the concept and the relationships, then I am going to say that I did indeed act with knowledge of the facts, I am going to verify that the knowledge is valid. But the problem is that I have already acted, and once I did, it may be that it helps me to say to myself: "That's good, you knew the determinations well!", or that I start banging my head because I say: "How stupid! I didn't realize there was this...", but I already acted, so I may say that next time this will not happen to me again. And the next time, what happened to me the previous time is not repeated, and again the belated knowledge will appear that I either acted knowingly or blindly. I thought I had knowledge of the facts in an apparent knowledge, which stopped at an appearance of exteriority. So, the verification is late and it does not help me to organize the action, because I have the same problem, it may be that the next result will not be the same.

In the very field of logical representation, a problem linked to representation itself begins to appear. And it is the problem that, since this is based on what is repeated or not, I cannot verify the construction that bears the name of theory, whether next time it will happen or not. So, what appears is the proposal that theories are logically unverifiable. I have no way of knowing if the theories are going to be valid because I have to wait for it to happen. And once it happened, I'm going to be able to make the external comparison of how this and this was presented, but when I act again, I don't know if it's going to be repeated or not. This has Hume's famous expression that if I have the theory that all swans are white, I can see all the white swans I want, that I don't know if they are all white, and it is enough for me to see a black swan for my theory to be falsified. Then it will appear that theories cannot be verified but they can be falsified, proven to be false: it is enough to have a case that is not repeated. It is remarkable the contrast that exists when this approach begins to appear, how it changes from the development of positivism to the questioning of that objective knowledge, but I leave it and continue.

In contrast to the proposal of the falsification of theories, there is the proposal that I have the theory that being white is an attribute of the swan, and that then if a black swan comes, that is not a swan, but another animal. And consequently, what is developing is that there is no way to verify *or falsify* theories. And to this are going to be added several more issues. Mathematics, which is supposed to be based or was based on logic, there is an individual (I don't remember if in 1908) who says: mathematics has left... I don't know if there were 11, or 18 theoretical problems to solve. After that, there is nothing else in the field of mathematics to discover. And very few years later...

Alejandro: Isn't it Popper who raises the swan issue?

JIC: It comes from Hume. It is remarkable that Comte cannot understand what Hume is saying, because it is the moment when logical representation will lead to

full objective knowledge. Popper is the one who brings this to the discussion and to the conclusion that theories cannot be verified.

Then, this appears, and very few years later, Russell poses his paradox, which is roughly the following. In mathematics it is proposed that there are proper and improper sets. Proper sets contain themselves, and improper sets do not. So the set of all proper sets is a self-set that contains itself. But what is the set of all sets that do not contain themselves? For if it is improper, it cannot contain itself, but if it is its own, it does not contain itself either. And that is going to produce a whole transformation in mathematics, which goes from being based on logic to being based on axioms. And if logical principles can be shown but not demonstrated, axioms depend on the subjectivity of each one: there are axioms that I like, that I accept, and others that I do not accept. Then, a series of mathematics appears depending on whether an axiom is accepted or not.

But the statement of the axiom is that it is self-evident. And then, how is the consistency of this construction sustained? And it is going to be argued that it holds because the axioms have to be well formed. And an individual named Skolem comes[240] along and says: but this leads to another paradox. How do I know that this set of axioms is well formed? Because I have an axiom that says this set is well-formed. But how do I know that the axiom is well formed? And I have to build a finite system of axioms on the basis of an infinity of axioms, I have this contradiction. And this is going to be developed.

Axiomatic systems forget Skolem's paradox, mathematicians put them together without the slightest problem, forgetting the logical incoherence they have. And along comes one called Gödel, and he shows that every system of axioms, if it is consistent, then it is incomplete, and that if it is complete it contains a contradiction, it is inconsistent. And that, therefore, every axiomatic system carries this condition. And another one comes along (which I don't remember what it's called[241]) and says that there is no general way to be able to tell if the axiom is consistent (but then it is incomplete) or inconsistent (and then it is complete).

And so it is remarkable how in the books of formal logic, what were the logical principles are erased, like: "Well, there are *other* principles that exist"; and the construction is of an axiomatic character, it is no longer the foundation of the construction. What about Russell's paradox? It is not a quantitative problem, but a qualitative one. The set of all sets that do not contain themselves is qualitatively distinct from all the sets it contains. So, there is a question of a qualitative nature, when for logic there is no possibility of differentiating. Then there are several other things. It appears that in simple systems, the result tends to be a single value, but by very different paths: the theory of chaos, that from small initial differences enormous differences can be generated in the course of development. And a few other things, but I don't want to spend much more time on this.

So, where it was the realm of logic par excellence, all these questions appear that it is impossible to verify, it is impossible to falsify, no one can prove their

[240] Thoralf Skolem.
[241] He may be referring to Church and his undecidability theorem.

theories... And so all that can be done—it seems to me that it is Popper who says this—is that, since we cannot rationally prove our theories, what we must do is to discuss them rationally. What does this mean? The most concise expression of this is a text by another mathematician and logician who is Lakatos, who puts this in an article: of course, every scientist is free to think what he wants, but if it is going to go against the common sense of the community of scientists, it is better that he do it in private, because if he does it in public, you know what happens, and then that individual should not be published or financed. What is the truth then? And the point is that it is impossible to know objectively. Then, all knowledge will be provisionally accepted if, rationally discussed, it is considered that this is how far it is possible to get with knowledge, and that it is true with what is known so far. Now, who can say that? Individuals who act rationally, as fully free individuals, those who seek the truth: the community of scientists. So what that community agreed is true, so far, it is true. And if someone says something that doesn't agree with that common sense, they must be liquidated.

So far this side of the question appears. But there is going to be a development that follows this that seems to be the very opposite of the historical starting point of logical representation. And it is: *let* 's accept that it cannot be known objectively. It is then proclaimed as if it were an indisputable objective truth that it is impossible to know an objective truth. If it is impossible to know, the first thing you should doubt is that it is impossible to know. What one can synthesize in the terms of "postmodernism" will then be developed: every attempt at objective knowledge is branded as dogmatic. And there is one more step in that, which is that since no one can know, it is said that those who say they know carry out an exercise of coercion on others, of imposing their knowledge on others. Everything appears as a linguistic construction that is in thought, everything is text, and consequently all that can be done is to interpret reality in different ways, and there is no more valid way of interpreting than the others. There is no method. This will be synthesized in an expression of one of the initial heads of postmodernism, Feyerabend: as far as method is concerned, anything goes. I can build whatever comes to mind, starting from what comes to mind and relating it as I think of it. This "grand narratives" appears[242], because they are all textual constructions that are intended to be imposed on the freedom of thought of individuals.

We have already talked about the community of scientists where one asks sellers of labor power, often in quite precarious conditions, if they consider themselves members of the working class, and the answer is no. This is the expression of what is recognized as freedom, and in reality it has alienation as its full content. But this is unacceptable from the point of view of logical representation. And as a synthetic expression of this, there is a Nobel laureate in physics who, at a certain point in his life, after the prize, makes the following statement. He says that physicists are concerned with time, in relation to the discussion about whether time is reversible or not, because the function with which time is represented is linear, it has no beginning or end, so it could go backwards or not (which comes from looking at the way the function with which it is measured). And then this Nobel laureate, whose name was Prigogine, says: that

[242] Lyotard puts it.

concern that we scientists have for time is the same that Borges has for time. And consequently, what he develops about time and what physicists develop have the same validity, they are two forms of knowledge: poetry and science. Now: they organize actions in very different forms one and the other, but as anything goes, they have the same power according to this approach.

And then, we find this transformation in the approaches to scientific knowledge. He begins by proposing that through logical representation he will transform the world and objectively know all real determinations —the fullness of positivism—, and in postmodernism he arrives at the negation of objective knowledge. Both starting from the same base. What happens in practice? This is divided into two camps – this is what the fragmentation of science is for: the individuals who have to operate in the field of physics (Prigogine is the exception), are absolutely unaware that there is any questioning of the foundations of scientific objectivity. And those who have to fulfill the role of affirming that objective knowledge is impossible, do not bother to ask themselves about the starting point of their proposal and live in a world apart. One is the world of "critical" (strictly uncritical) epistemologists and the other is that of uncritical physicists. And there is a situation in which the two proposals are confronted, a few years ago.

There is an American physicist, Sokal, who sent an article to a postmodern magazine in the United States, "Social text" (because everything is textual), saying that more and more physicists were coming to the conviction of... — I don't know if it was the universe — that the universe is a textual construction. And it was a very long article full of quotes, and the people of the magazine, with one of the most famous progressive American philosophers, have no choice but to publish it because it is what they want to hear. And then, Sokal publishes in another magazine, "Lingua franca", saying that what he presented was a string of incoherent nonsense everywhere, and that it also included a false quote, from a text that does not exist, something that in the world of academia...

Then, a whole discussion arose where he was first accused of bad faith, but the argument was very weak. And on the internet I once saw it, because it was widely disseminated, in a blog or I don't know what there was, one saying that the social sciences are useless, they are not scientific, they are blackmailers who publish anything and do not comply with the rigors of science. And Sokal's response was: I have some friends who are social scientists and are very serious. So that's the only sense social science can make for one side of the argument. What neither of them recognizes... Because others glorify irrationality, of not being able to know objectively, but Sokal forgets that his own science cannot lay its foundations, that an axiom must be put forward that is self-evident. Therefore, on both sides they have the same base weakness. One ignores it and the other flaunts. And so the question we have is: Why is this form of scientific knowledge, logical representation, the form of knowledge par excellence of the whole development of the production of relative surplus value through the system of machinery?

Edgardo: I wanted to ask, on this, if historically there is an origin of this form of scientific knowledge, if we can refer to a specific author, some text, some theory.

JIC: I would put it that way – and I clarify that I don't know much about the historical development of these things. Representation is the most elementary or immediate form of objective knowledge. The forms of religious knowledge, in their historical genesis, carry with them in their development forms of objective knowledge based on a representation, which gradually has the character of a logical representation because otherwise, the representation cannot be made. When you begin to know the seasons of the year, and you can begin to measure them at what time of the year they are going to occur, there begins to be a representation developed in the form of a religious representation, but it has an objective movement: the position of the Sun has been measured, how long it takes to reach such a place... When irrigation systems are developed, there is an objective knowledge that is based on a representation as well: I take the phenomenon as it is presented to me and I represent it to myself with these relations, but mixing in this process objective relations and fantastic relations. But even the individual who is making the vessel is a manual work, a knowledge that he acquires in practice, but the individual, the form that this knowledge has, is also that of a representation, and it has an objective character: you have to turn the wheel at a certain speed, and he knows it, even if he does not know how much it is.

Now, the more complex the process of human life becomes, the more that knowledge needs to be developed as objective knowledge. And typically it will develop in societies that base their lives on large-scale irrigated agriculture. Complexity means that ways of objectifying this objective knowledge are needed. And so, it is the societies that develop writing, because it must be given an existence that transcends verbal objectification. And in all these societies constructions of structures of thought begin to appear that have the character of a logic. In societies where commodity production is developing, not because of what Sohn-Rethel says, but the other way around, it is the movement of commodity production itself that needs objective knowledge: one must know the value of this, one must begin to objectify in gold or copper or whatever the representation of this social relation is...

Mathematics has, by the nature of its object, the character of a logical representation; that is its full place, and not that of qualitative relations. Where quantitative relationships need to be established, a structure of logical representation must be constructed. Where is this development recognized for the first time, as an original development, already separated from religious representation? Because in previous different modes of production, it would seem that they do not appear separate. It is in classical Greece where it does appear separate. The one who appears to systematize all this construction is Aristotle, where in his "first principles"[243] (or something like that) he is laying the foundation of logical representation and makes the development of *formal logic*, because he stops at the exteriority of forms, and arrives at the development of the syllogism, the most developed concrete form of logical representation as a construction in itself.

[243] I believe that he expounds them in the *Metaphysics*, if not in the *Organon* (the name under which tradition groups all his works on logic).

Then there are discussions in the logic that comes from Aristotelianism, which go to particular aspects of that representation. I once read something about a discussion with the Thomists... If anyone is interested, they can go to Bochensky, who is one of the authorities of modern logic and has a book on the historical development of logic. So this, Edgardo, if you look at a historian of logic can do this to you with many more intermediate steps. In the practice of discussions, Aristotle always appears as the one who lays all the foundations, and everything that has happened afterwards, they discuss whether it is an improvement, which is usually perfections of the way of expressing. Aristotle expressed the syllogism in a way that it is not expressed today. The simple way that one is used to today, those who are stricter say that one has to start with the "Yes... then...", if not, it is not well represented. And at the beginning of the twentieth century there is a boom, an explosion of logicism, of the syllogism represented by "p → q". [244]

Edgardo: Excellent. What worries me is what content representation has in the capitalist mode of production. I understand that it has as its content the production of relative surplus value, but what is the difference between the logical representation of capitalist society and representation as a form of knowledge in pre-capitalist societies?

JIC: You have what we were just saying. Let us put it this way so that it is not misunderstood: as the development of the productive forces of social labour, in the previous, non-capitalist modes of production, objective knowledge does not play the same role. What we saw was that what governs the implementation of social labour is the production of surplus value, and its most powerful form is the production of relative surplus value, and the most powerful form of this production is the development of machinery. Therefore, it is a necessity inherent in the immediate movement of capital to develop machinery. And the development of machinery has at its base the development of objective knowledge as such, independent of everything that is not objective knowledge, because natural forces must be objectively controlled, not mediated by the subjectivity of the individual who works, it is that control objectified in machinery.

And so far what we have is that the logical representation contains these contradictions that we were seeing. Now: it has a power of development of the capacity to control natural forces and objectify that control in machinery that seems to have no parallel or limit in historical development. In a very short time from the point of view of the development of humanity, this production with machinery has revolutionized what a human being is, and science, objective knowledge itself, has revolutionized itself. So, what we have to look at is where the power of logical representation as a form of production of relative surplus value comes from.

In Aristotle's time it is not the production of relative surplus value that ruled, it is the extraction of surplus product, which will take the form of "surplus value" in the sense of... Not in the sense that there is the purchase of labor power: there is slave labor power, but what produces it are commodities. And the problem that

[244] If it is true that "p" (a proposition, a sentence that can be said to be true or false)... So, "Q" is necessarily true.

Marx marks in Chapter I of explaining where the foundation of the exchange of equivalents comes from, and why Aristotle cannot see it, arises to Aristotle. But that's where it will appear... And then in the development of production based on machinery, this form of consciousness is imposed. What power does it have to have done this, what is its power based on? And what limitation does he have because he cannot lay the foundation of his own starting point? Because it has to accept externally that it depends on the subjectivity of the individuals who are going to develop objective knowledge, on the construction of that objective knowledge. Why does it get to the point where it denies its own potency? It is an objective knowledge that ends by affirming that it cannot be known objectively. Why does it contain this double determination of a contradictory character as the proper form of scientific knowledge in the production of relative surplus value, and therefore as the proper form of scientific knowledge in the capitalist mode of production as the immediate reproduction of the capitalist mode of production?

This is where the difference appears with respect to any previous historical form: the immediate objective of social production is not the production of human beings, it is the multiplication of this capacity to set social labor in motion. What is the fullest expression of this capacity? That the subjectivity of these individuals does not intervene immediately in the process of operation on the object of work, but intervenes in the development of the capacity to know the natural forces that are going to operate and to make them operate according to the ends of this human subject, to objectify the control of the unity of the process of social production and consumption.

It is the only society, in historical development, that can pass from non-objective representation as the dominant form of knowledge, to objective representation, first as the dominant form of knowledge, in fact in the practice of knowledge, and at the same time deny that it can be known objectively. For this double character is what is proper to a scientific knowledge of the capitalist mode of production insofar as it is always the need to transcend itself... But that's why it's hard to say; it is not simply as proper to the capitalist mode of production alone, because the other knowledge, the one we are supposed to be deploying, is also proper to the mode of production. And neither can we simply say – I said it before – the production of relative surplus value, because this is what leads the capitalist mode of production towards something that until now, as it has not yet appeared, we are not going to answer it. It will still appear, because it is inevitable.

Where do the powers that this form of objective knowledge has come from? It comes from the fact that it contains within its development mathematical knowledge, which has as its object ... If we are saying that when we are confronted with a concrete existence, what we see is that it is an actual existence that has potentials to realize, and that therefore, it will affirm itself through its own negation, when it realizes its potentialities it will no longer be the actual existence: it will have been transformed, and therefore, it will have been denied as that current existence and it will be a new current existence but that in turn contains potentials to be realized. The problem with action is: we look at ourselves as subjects and we are an actual existence that has potentials to be realized, and we look at the object on which we are going to act, and it does not matter if it is a

simple inanimate object or a living subject, because from the point of view of our action, that living subject is the object of our action and contains potentials to be realized.

I always put it in this in my face-to-face classes: I grab a piece of chalk and break it. In the chalk is the power to be broken with sufficient force. Now, if I tried to do the same with the desk leg, which is made of metal, there is the power of the iron to be bent, but I am not the bearer of the power to bend it (It happened to me once that I could not break the chalk and I felt like Mr. Burns: I am finished [Laughter]). Then, when a current existence reaches its end—it realizes what it has as a potential—it is transformed into a present existence different from the one that existed before. But what about the magnitude of things? What happens with the determination of magnitude is that this determination reaches its end, transcends it, and the object qualitatively remains the same as it was before. Until it reaches an absolute term in its magnitude. In quantitative determination, if I go beyond the term, what lies beyond is a quantitative difference, not a qualitative one, or the only qualitative difference that magnitude has is the quantitative difference.

I have one pencil, two pencils, three, and what I have are pencils: at the end of a pencil there is only one pencil, and the difference is that it is not the same to have three as five. And then, what is the content of this determination? It is an affirmation through one's own negation, transcending oneself, which transcends oneself. And so it is an affirmation through the negation of one's own negation: the negation is negated in quantitative determination. And what happens to me is that I have differences, but when I want to look at them, they appear to me as an indifference. A very crude example: I can say that this seed is going to affirm itself through its own negation, it is going to be transformed into a plant. I can accompany with my thought the movement from seed to plant. Now: I have the number 5. And I have nowhere to go and look at how it becomes the number 6, and yet it is different from the number 6, which is a magnitude that has transcended the one represented in the number 5. And consequently, what I have is a difference, but I have no way of accompanying the movement that carries that difference. The only thing I can do is to put the 5 in external relation to the 6.

I clarify that it is a very rude example: the 5 has no need to transcend itself and become 6. It is a quantity, and therefore it is indifferent, because qualitatively it is the same, a quantity, and yet I have a difference, but it appears to me as an indifference. And then I have to use a structure of representation that starts from reflecting that I am representing a movement that is presented as the negation of movement. And then I am going to say: I have a starting point that tells me that a quantity, the quantum, does not transcend itself, that when it reaches its end it is still this quantum. But I'll leave this for later.

But then, here there is room for a representation, and what formal logic does is to represent what is proper to quantitative determination as if it were proper to qualitative determination, it turns the thing upside down. He says: I am starting with qualitative determination, with the representation of quality, and then I arrive at quantity. When in reality it is starting with what is proper to the representation of quantity, posed as if that were the quality. And then when you

get to the quantity and recognize it as a quantity, you can only see a portion of the quantity. But what logical representation cannot do is to start by setting its own starting point.

In what I have planted, the starting point is that here there is an affirmation through the negation itself that is affirmed through its own negation, and that is why I cannot accompany it in its unfolding. Therefore, the power that logical representation has to govern the transformation of real concrete forms is that it can establish the relations of measurement. Real concrete forms are represented through their relations of measurement. It cannot explain what it measures, but it measures it more and more precisely. And then, it operates on the measure and now it transforms the quantitative difference into a qualitative difference. He does not know what he is doing beyond knowing that if this quantity of this object is operated on, it will be qualitatively different, and hence its power to transform absolutely all the material conditions of production (to put it that way).

What is the form par excellence of this science? It is the construction of models. The term "model" comes from the term "measure". What does the model do? An abstract form is generally represented by the relation of measurement between its concrete forms. I take this, which is a manifestation of that which was there, and I have the quantum of this, I take this other, which is another manifestation of that with its quantum. So, I put them in an external relation that conforms to logical principles and I represent the result of this relation, I represent to myself the abstract form as the result of these relations of measurement. I don't know if you understand it.

I am going to take the example taken by Hegel. Hegel is looking at a turning point in the development of this form of scientific knowledge: the system of machinery is sprouting in full. And he wrote his work – for me the greatest – *Science of Logic* between 1812-1816, when the Industrial Revolution had just exploded. And he comes from having written the *Phenomenology of Spirit before*, where he is advancing what is going to be proposed as the starting point of science in general, because for him the science of logic is science. And what he sees at the same time is the whole development of this other form of logical representation, where he sees that they are all formal foundations, there is not the development of the reason for this, but there is a formal relation based on relations of measurement. Then, he confronts Newton's proposals (its development comes from much earlier, but the use of his discovery on gravity is in full explosion).

Newton has made a formula, a measurement relationship that allows the measurement of gravity to be represented. But when Newton has to explain what he has discovered, he says: what happens is that there is a "force", bodies contain forces that attract them to each other. An object falls on Earth because there is a force that pulls the object toward it. And so Hegel makes this reasoning... he must have been quite angry with Newton, because he says that they all have him in heaven. But Newton explains gravity by saying that objects fall because there is a force that attracts them. And if someone were to say that this individual goes to the city, because there is a force in the city that draws him to the city, everybody would realize that that doesn't mean anything. And he says that physics is full of these

things: the description of the phenomenon is accepted as if it were the cause of the phenomenon.

When one looks at Einstein's development, one criticizes Newton for the imprecision of his measurement. Newton's development reaches a point where it is no longer useful, it is useful for a part, but it begins to need a precision of measurement that his formula does not allow to achieve. And then, what does Einstein propose? I am going to try to reproduce it, although I do not remember exactly: that in space-time there is an uneven distribution of matter that curves space-time, and that is why bodies move towards each other following the line of that curvature. In the case of the Earth, the movement of the body of a human subject is negligible compared to the degree of curvature that space-time has due to the mass of the Earth, and therefore, that is why the force of gravity is verified.

But one can put this in the same terms that Hegel put in saying: if one were to explain rural-urban migrations because, due to the curvature of "social" spacetime, the mass of population is unequally distributed and is in urban centers, and that is why the individual moves towards urban centers... One could try to present a *paper* with this, but I don't know if it would be very successful (maybe it would). What does Einstein's formula do? Measure more accurately. Therefore, it allows us to operate with more precision in the transformation of quantitative differences into qualitative ones. What about Einstein's formula? That it no longer reaches the precision of measurement that it has, and it is questioned whether, just as Einstein questions that a constant that Newton takes was not a constant, the constant that Einstein takes is questioned that it is. So, it has this power, it is the form par excellence in this process of objectification of natural forces, etc.

It is already late, I am simply going to state it: what other power does it have from the point of view of capital? This other power is manifested in the fact that it cannot be objectively known, science cannot lay its own foundation. So, that foundation has to be laid by philosophy. Because science is powerless to found itself. When this appears, it appears that philosophy is not objective knowledge, because it is not a science. It is a knowledge that springs from the subjectivity [...] of individuals who are free by nature. What happens if one wonders about the necessity that his condition as a free individual entails? What he finds is that it is a form of alienation, and then he has an objective answer about his condition as a free individual. If science does not lay its own foundation, it starts from the appearance of the condition of a naturally free individual, and from there it starts: each one constructs a knowledge that, as it is based on axioms, is based on subjectivity and cannot have an objective character.

Why does objective knowledge stop at logical representation? Because there can be no content that is not immediately the same as its manifestation, that is the starting point. And here what one is saying is that there is a content that is the opposite of its manifestation. What need does this form of knowledge satisfy from the point of view of capital? An ideological necessity: it is the negation of objective knowledge, and it satisfies this need by reducing content to form. What does capital need from individuals who carry scientific knowledge? That they never objectively ask themselves about their own subjectivity. Otherwise, he would

discover himself as a subject who is free because he is alienated. Thus, logical representation is the way in which the ideological need of capital to reproduce alienation is satisfied without the possibility of the individual recognizing himself in it. The method itself says that alienation does not exist: either one is free or one is alienated.

To close this, I summarize it with the following. Here one is faced with what seems to be an epistemological problem, because it is a method of knowledge, and what it contains in that form is a problem of the political action of the working class. Because if objective human knowledge is not possible, if by nature it has been exhausted in logical representation, it is impossible to organize a process of social life in which the social relation is objective knowledge about what one is... We said: consciousness is how I know myself as an individual organ of this process of social metabolism. If I cannot do this, socialism or communism is an impossible mode of production, and therefore the capitalist mode of production is eternal. That is what is contained in the cultivation that by nature scientific knowledge has the form of a logical representation.

What happens in Marxism? He states that every social form is historical. We have already seen that knowledge is a social form, and the method of knowledge is the form that we carry in our individual subjectivity the ability to recognize ourselves as individual organs of the process of social metabolism, and therefore, the scientific method is a social and historical form. What is it that appears universally proposed? That this is the natural form of scientific knowledge. But in Marxism it is recognized that every social form is historical, except for the scientific method, which by nature has the form of a logical representation. And this is what we continue to discuss.

[Method III. The dialectical method]

Up to this point we have come to look at the "double virtue" that logical representation has for capital, especially in terms of the need for the capitalist mode of production to develop the capacity to control natural forces to produce relative surplus value through machinery. But, at the same time, how does it achieve this? Because every concrete form is represented as if it were an immediate affirmation whose necessity is also immediately manifested, and the way to capture this manifestation of necessity is through the repetition of a certain attribute of the concrete. Since this structure of representation corresponds to the representation of the relations of measurement between the different concrete forms, although it cannot explain what is the need that is at stake, what it can do is to relate the different concrete forms to their abstract forms, that is: where a need

that is realized in the concrete form, it is in potency in the abstract form, it can put them in the relation of measure; and by measuring with ever greater precision each concrete that is in front of him, operating on the measure of that concrete transforming it into his measure, and through his quantitative transformation, having achieved a qualitative transformation. It cannot account for what qualitative transformation consists of, only that what it has in front of it is a qualitatively different concrete.

I don't think I had come up with this approach in the development, but all the developments in science based on logical representation have the character of constructions structured through comparative statics. There is one thing, and next to it is this thing transformed into something else, but what cannot be put is the transit from one to another, there is a jump. And this leap, what logical representation achieves is to make it smaller and smaller, but there is always a leap, because it cannot accompany the movement of transformation. Accompanying it implies that what is in front of us is not inert, that it contains a need to be realized, and therefore it cannot be linked externally with its concrete form realized through logical necessity.

This first virtue is accompanied by a second virtue for capital. It consists in the fact that, if nothing can move by itself, if nothing leads a power to realize, in the first place what appears is that the capitalist mode of production cannot surpass itself in its own movement. All there can be is something that comes from outside the capitalist mode of production; and, as with the exception of constructions that delude themselves with the appearance that there is something outside (we have not yet seen all the determinations by which it is clear that there is no outside), then what appears is that the capitalist mode of production is eternal. And thanks to this method, the individual who deploys it, the bearer of this objective knowledge, can account for every determination through a relation of measurement, but he cannot account for the fact that he is an individual who is advancing in his freedom because he is knowing his determinations, because he is alienated in capital. Nothing can contain a need contrary to what is manifested. And this is the expression that the advance in scientific development is the development of human freedom, according to the principles of logical representation it can never be the bearer of the reproduction of alienation.

Thus, logical representation fulfills the double role of being a vehicle of objective knowledge and at the same time of the negation of objective knowledge: an ideology. And we saw last time that the ideological expression is that, after having glorified for a whole period the capitalist mode of production the potentiality of logical representation to transform all real existence, the opposite development arises: it cannot be objectively known. Therefore, the empowerment of social life cannot be governed through objective knowledge. Here what appears is that science cannot lay its own foundation, it has to look for them outside science, in philosophy, and philosophy is not objective. It is not presented as a science but as the negation of this objective knowledge. And what philosophy proposes is that knowing is the advance of the human being in his freedom, which is free by nature, and logical representation is the natural form of objective knowledge, which at the same time cannot have the character of objective knowledge.

Aristides: Juan, at some point in the course you alluded to Hegel's statement that a qualitative change could become a quantitative change. Is this what you were referring to with this that you took from the last meeting? Because the problem in Hegel, what would it be? That it remains on a plane of abstractions instead of seeing the unfolding of the concrete? It is not clear to me if there is a criticism or if it is taken from that approach.

JIC: I don't know if I followed you well in this, but I answer. What Hegel does in this respect is that he discovers something that logical representation cannot found. It does not bother to say that here we make a quantitative change and it becomes a qualitative change, but that is what this science does. An example: you have to develop the machinery, which is going to operate in transformations that have a certain scale at a historical moment, beyond that there is no possibility of moving forward. Then, Newton's development appears, which allows a certain precision in measurement. When Newton is criticized, it is not said that he did not understand what gravity was, but that he was imprecise in his measurement. Why do these types of proposals appear? Because if up to this point you could operate on a body, now you have to get inside a body, you have to recognize quantitative differences inside that body. A "supraatomic" explanation is no longer enough, now we need an explanation that goes to the atom, because the precision with which it can operate is not that of classical mechanics, now it is beginning to be that of quantum mechanics, because now the need and the possibility of transcending the scope of the transformation of classical mechanics is appearing.

What is happening today with Einstein's proposals? It starts with the fact that you have to put things, that when you look at the names they give them... That is forcing relations that need to overcome this. I was very impressed by this, I don't even remember what it is, but a certain term appears that are "gluons", from "*glue*" in English (glue), because it says that they are particles that keep the other particles glued. And he begins to make a whole explanation that has more and more parts to be able to maintain unity. And the manifestation that progress is being made on the precision of measurement that Einstein's proposal allows, is that it begins to be said that things that Einstein took as a constant are not constants. It is the same criticism of Newton as Einstein. But up to now, considering a constant it was enough to be able to operate, from now on it was not. There is a time in the development of machinery itself that the time of processes in seconds, and – the engineers are going to kill me – today it is useless, they talk about *nanoseconds*. Why was seconds enough before? Because for the precision with which it had to be operated, it was enough, today it is not useful to make the operation, I pass over a difference and now I have to operate on that difference. So, this with respect to what happens within the logical representation itself.

What would you say about Hegel? Hegel knows logical representation, what he will call the "formal foundations", and he says that he remains in the exteriority of the phenomenon: he gives as the foundation of the phenomenon what the phenomenon itself is. I think he said last time that the whole structure of the *Science of Logic*, each part is divided into three, each chapter into three, each part of the chapter into three others, and there are notes where he tries to explain what

he cannot in those three parts, where he faces the concrete questions. And there, instead of being in front of the fact that this is the concept that is being developed... Instead of wanting to adjust to that construction that he is making, he gives an explanation that is often to take a specific expression, or something that he raises... Well, Kant is constantly questioning the antinomies, and he says what is going on in this reasoning.

In this development that Hegel makes, the inversion he has is that [for him, that development] is how the existent is engendered, it is not that I am confronting the existing, the objective, and I am recognizing it through my thought. Since my thought is the fullest expression of objectivity, what I am confronting springs from my thought. It doesn't go too well, but that's it. And he says: what is the first thing I think about this question? The first thing is the form that this has, but I can't stop there: I have *to generate* the content that it has. And when I generate it, I have to ask myself why it has this form that I had known first. So he does all the development like this, every time he finishes a point he says that if he looks at how far he went, in reality that was the form of something, and if he stayed there he would not be able to move forward, he has these problems and contradictions; then, it has *to give* this (not even an *answer)* a content. And then the development of the content begins.

I am going to ask how the reading was presented to me. What is it that often appears with the question of Hegel? Well, it makes an idealist construction, and Marx said that you have to put it on your feet. But many times what appears is that where it says "idea" you have to put "matter". But it is clear that this is not what is at stake with regard to Hegel. The problem I had (I put it in these terms, because if not, my daughter is going to kill me, since she maintains that the experience of one does not serve others) is that I could see the abstract form, but she could not answer why it had the concrete form that it had. It has to do with ["universal"?] training processes[245].

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* —which is what Marx recognizes as Hegel's expression that led him forward (he later says that he reread the *Logic* before writing the *Contribution*—Hegel starts from the immediate and makes abstraction until he arrives precisely at *being*, at the simplest content. And I tried to read this and I said: this doesn't tell me anything, I have no problem getting to *being*, my problem is to return to these concrete forms. And the *Science of logic*, precisely the structure it has is to start with the simplest determination and unfold the concrete forms. But he does not unfold them as if he is recognizing, from this simpler determination, how this concrete moves, but as if what he was doing is engendering that concrete. So, it didn't even occur to me that the problem is whether he was idealistic or not. Me, this was the question I had, how from this simpler content I advance on these concrete forms. So, there is a point at which Hegel has to explain why human thought, if it is objectivity itself, how it is possible that knowledge has remained in the formal, apparent explanation. His answer at one point is that it is a problem of maturity of thought. Thought has to continue to

[245] Inaudible.

recognize itself in its objectivity, and it will do so later. And he is bitter because he has not already done so.

So, I return to the question of the transformation of the quantitative difference into a qualitative difference. What Hegel does is to recognize this; It is not that it engenders it, but that it realizes that in reality one can operate on a concrete that has certain qualities, and through the relations of measurement that is the relationship between quality and quantity, transform the quality into it. And this is what is going to be synthesized, or crystallized, in the law of the transformation of quantity into quality. One looks at it all the time and has a qualitative transformation in the movement that manifests itself in a quantitative transformation. But when one wants to operate on that qualitative determination, one of the points through which one can operate is through its quantity. What happens is that it is an action that is blind to what it is that it is transforming, it knows that it can operate that way but it cannot explain why it transformed the quality.

One of the things that gives you a lot to think about, and since I was worried about another aspect I didn't think too much, does this. There is a development in which chemistry comes first and then comes physics. And when he looks at physics he says that it is the study of the qualitative moment, it has nothing to do with mathematics. And he is furious, because he says that all physics is studied from the point of view of the quantitative moment. And he has an expression that is very intelligent, because it also transcends that simply, where he says: physics suffers in atomistic theory the same as political science, which believes that all social processes arise from the sole will of individuals. What he is saying is that there is a qualitative unity here, and the atoms are not the unity that forms matter, they are a differentiation within matter. But it's hard to see what it would be exactly. One can say: modern physics cannot explain what gravity is. The problem is to explain what qualitative transformation gravity is. So, referring to this, quantity in quality, is a way of operating on matter that does not know quality. I don't know, Aristides, if I answered what you wanted.

Aristides: Yes, of course. He comes to face the problem but cannot overcome it.

JIC: What it does is invert it: what it sees as the engendering of objectivity is the form that knowledge has of an objectivity that is not engendered by thought, but is the other way around: thought confronts that objectivity in order to appropriate it.

In the *Anti-Dühring*, Engels has a mixture of things, because part of it has a whole reasoning of formal logic – which Hegel has in other terms, as if it were the engendering of concepts – as if it were not the representation of the object, and then he takes as if it were proper to dialectical knowledge something that is a representation. That it plays a role in human knowledge. One does not always need dialectical knowledge: there is instinctive knowledge, situations in which representation is enough to be able to operate. The problem is that the organization of the process of social metabolism as an organ, a subject that has individual organs, is the most complex form of matter that the human being faces.

And representation is useless there, it remains in appearances that it cannot overcome.

But in the *Anti-Dühring*, Engels mocks Dühring with some things that are very clear in the development he makes. And with regard to the transformation of the quantitative difference into a qualitative one, he says that Dühring criticizes Marx for appealing to this transformation when he says that any quantity of money is not enough — if I remember correctly — to be capital, that an amount determined by the conditions of the accumulation of capital at each moment is needed. that we have been seeing that the magnitude to be able to function as capital is increasingly greater.

Engels makes a whole development by stating this, and then says: after all, Dühring is right, because Napoleon maintained that a French soldier was inevitably defeated by a Mamluke, that two equaled a Mamluk... and it came to the point that ten French soldiers inevitably defeated thirty Mamluks. And Engels then says: all this is false, because by allowing himself to be carried away by this law of quantitative difference in qualitative, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo (as if to say: all this he proposed is invalidated). So there's the example of how quantitative difference makes a qualitative difference. Engels looks for the qualitative difference in itself and says: at least this is a closed order, it is an organized collective body, while the Mamluks act each for itself. So, it is the qualitative difference that is in the structure of that body, but it is expressed as if the quantitative difference makes the qualitative difference.

Alejandro: Thinking about this operation that through quantitative transformations a qualitative change is going to be made, beyond this example of the French soldiers against the Mamelukes, I was thinking about how science in general now operates, and the question of trials came to mind as an example. When I worked in a certain company, we had to carry out a series of tests to check that a certain light component of a car was suitable for extreme temperatures. And it was subjected to temperature cycles from 100º to -80º, because the component had to continue working at the end of the test. If it did not work, there was a fault that had to be detected, but then he was realizing that he was operating qualitatively on the object.

JIC: That's right. And the essay, in reality, is a real reproduction in conditions that are controlled with respect to the different quantitative determinations that will be able to operate on the object. The essay actually reproduces concrete, only isolating it from the quantitative effect of certain determinations. But that is the enormous power of logical representation.

Alejandro: Sure. And an expression that I also wanted to raise from what you mentioned about Hegel, which ultimately ends up being an idealist form, of how consciousness is engendering itself, and I thought that beyond the fact that the absolute majority of the branches of science are not recognized in Hegel, we are talking about this that when the object is being studied, what is being done is to determine it. It may simply be a matter of language, but for me it is not, because when you want to have surgery, you are always talking about... when it is being

heard in the first instance, to determine what the object is. Not to identify the determination and then operate on it and determine it, but right off the bat, when one is facing it and studying it, as a mental operation, one is determining it. That's how it appears, let's say.

JIC: It's not just... One finds that one has to ideally appropriate something that exists in potential. And it may be that the process of knowing that something operates not mentally, but *really* on the object. In which case... I'm going to put it with the example of the photons, which when you see where it is, it runs. If I have an object that when I want to measure it, my measurement process affects it, I have to be able to know the measure of the effect in my measurement process, it is one more determination of the object I want to know. It is affecting the size of the object, it is transforming it. Okay. In the process of operating ideally on the object I actually operated, and I have to see how much I transformed it. But then that serves ideologically to say that it cannot be known objectively, because when I know, I am affecting the object. But everything that appears in science, in logical representation in the capitalist mode of production, has the double character of being objective knowledge and its negation at the same time, and fulfilling an ideological role.

One thing had remained from the last time, but I thought it was with the most classical religious conceptions, not with the *new age*. But what does one have with this measurement? Science can objectively measure what is called the "Big Bang" in I don't know how many thousandths of a second about... —I don't remember how much the magnitude was—, and because of that difference you can know, but what happens before you can't. What is it that sneaks in because of what is said? What is put in is God. So science could not prove that God does not exist because we do not know what happened, and there are a lot of physicists who study these processes who have a religious conscience, because of the argument that since we cannot know that moment, a creation may have taken place from nothing.

All the time science satisfies these two needs of capital. Now, to the need for objective knowledge, I just made this statement: when one looks at the organization of the process of social metabolism, it is the most complex form that the object of human knowledge has because it is the organization of action itself. It is much more complex than the knowledge of how an individual organ operates from that process of social metabolism. This is the difference between biology and social science. With the exception, Marx says, that there will come a time when there will be only one science, that of humanized nature, which is the human being knowing himself as a natural organ, in his condition of being generic with respect to nature. So, where physics can advance and develop its models, when it is necessary to operate on the social process through the relations of measurement – and all models are based on measuring what is repeated – the measurement process has always measured what happened but does not know what is potential, what this entails. Since the complexity of the process of social life is very great, the process of measurement is absolutely imprecise.

And that is where a knowledge that transcends the relations of measurement appears. Because what Marx develops in *Capital* is that knowledge, which is not a

knowledge that has as its axis the deployment of relations of measurement, but the deployment of a quality, he recognizes what that quality is and what he looks at is what measures it takes, what forms it takes and therefore what magnitudes it has. He does not say that he looks at capital in historical development and sees that it is getting bigger and bigger. What he says is: capital, which is this social relation, carries with it the need to be bigger and bigger, *because* it needs to reproduce and multiply – and for that it needs to be transformed qualitatively – it has to be quantitatively bigger and bigger.

So, unless you want to raise something else, I would propose that we look again at what we did. When we start, we look at ourselves, because we set off... There is a very big quantitative transformation from the starting point to today [Laughs], since we were a hundred or so participants, I could not do what I always did in the face-to-face workshops, which is the question of why they are here, what is the point, and each one of us answer why they came to *the Capital workshop*. We tried to look at it, and in trying to do it there was a misunderstanding and the answer was distorted. What we try to look at is that I ask myself what I am doing as a political subject.

And we said: what do we do, do we start with income? Do I have to change the distribution of income? And we said: one can ask oneself about this and say that this is unjust, and be satisfied with the answer, and then one knows what one has to do. Or one may say that here there is an antagonistic relationship with other subjects that I face, and I have to know what I do in that confrontation. And then I can say that I have conflicting interests with them and I already know what I have to do. But for some reason, for those who remained here at least, that answer was not enough. Because I have to ask myself where this conflicting interest comes from.

And going back to income, I see that some have a salary and others a profit, and since I have a salary, I have that antagonistic relationship. Or I carry with me the need to ask myself again what a salary and a profit are. And I continued on the path of profit: it is what capital produces. On the way back, I can stop there or ask myself what capital is. And it is an amount of money. And I can stop there or I can ask myself again. And then I say: money is used for commodities to be exchanged. So I have to answer myself what a commodity is. And then we said: this is where we start.

In fact, we explicitly go further back, because when we talk about use value we were talking about a condition for human life: appropriating the environment. But when we talk about these use-values as products of labor, we ask ourselves about... One is content that was in this before. And in reality, if we had deployed going backwards, we would have found the same thing that we are encountering when we start, in this sense. Why do I have the question of *what to do*? Because I am a current existence with powers to be realized. If I did not have them, if I were an abstract current existence, an immediate affirmation, I never have to ask myself what to do, because I am inert to transcend myself. So, when I ask myself about the simplest form of matter, I see that it is a current existence that has potentials to

realize, and I am a form of that realized power, and that is why I remain a current existence that has potentials to realize. What I need to answer myself is how I perform, what form I give to those powers.

This is the first part of the process of knowledge that we have been doing, with a method that has nothing to do with logical representation. He does not say that here we must start by *saying* that all current existence is a pure current existence without any need to be realized. Because if we look at ourselves, what we have in front of us is that we are not that. Therefore, if we wanted to know in the other way, we were going to start by denying the first step we took. And then the question is: why do I want to know if I have no powers to realize? Now: when we come to the simplest form of this specific determination of our subjectivity... We never asked ourselves about something other than our own subjectivity, because we were asking ourselves about the content of a form, we were confronted with a form that was our action, our subjectivity, and we asked ourselves about the content, and about the content of the content.

When we began the development of this path, we had not arrived at concepts, what we arrived at is the commodity, and when we faced it we did not say: "This is the commodity", but we began to look at it. And then we asked ourselves about its need, what it is, and we analyzed it and said that it has this attribute, etc. And we continue to ask ourselves what is, not what is repeated in the commodity. To such an extent, we could have done that analysis of the commodity with a single commodity. If we take any commodity and ask ourselves about its need, we will find the same thing we have been finding.

When Marx says, in the postface to the 2nd edition, when he is answering about his method, and he says: and if one is lucky enough (an expression that I understand ironically), to have reproduced, deployed the determinations well, it can always seem that we are dealing with an *a priori* construction. Why is he saying this? If I take a commodity and analyze it, I will find the same thing. With this observation: if I take an object that *appears* to be a commodity but is not, I will not find the determinations of the commodity. If we had started from virgin land, which is not a commodity, which has a price but has no value, we would never have been able to discover what a commodity is, although in appearance it is the same. Why can it seem like a construction *a priori*? Because I took a commodity that I knew was a commodity: I didn't just grab anything and say: ah well, it's something that has a price. I grabbed something, started looking at it and discovered that they are products of work. Then, once the substance of value was discovered and that substance unfolded in the necessary concrete form, I discovered that there are things that have the same form but not the same substance.

So, we begin to unfold the potentiality that this simpler determination has. In this case we had discovered the substance of the value of the commodity by abstracting from the form it takes. And Marx says: now we have to return to form. And when we began to unfold it, the difference between the relative pole and the equivalent pole began to appear. And then, where there was an indistinguishable equality as an attribute, now that we begin to accompany what the value in the

commodity has in potential, what it begins to show us is that it affirms itself by its own negation, transcends itself, and because the value of the two commodities is equal, it takes the concrete form of a different role in one and in the other. And we continue to look at the unfolding of that different role, and we come to a point where... We had started by saying that no commodity is capable of expressing the magnitude of its own value because it has to enter into a relation of exchange with another, and we arrived at money and we had precisely one commodity that cannot express the magnitude of its own value, but can express that of all the others, it is immediately exchangeable for all the others. So, that which no commodity could be, now we have in front of us that the commodity that occupies the place of money does have that attribute.

I take this a step further. What does logical representation say? One in development, which for logical representation is a construction of models, based on starting from simple concepts, raising simplifying assumptions and then arriving at the concrete, what do you say about this step? And he says: if the simple model affirms something, and when I raise the simplifying assumptions, the complex model says the opposite or does not satisfy what the simple model said, then either the simple model is false or it is trivial. And then, the simple model is invalidated: let's start again, it is wrong because it does not satisfy the tautological coherence that corresponds to logical representation.

We did the opposite. What we did is to see how the concrete form is the negation of the simple form. When we get to Volume 3, this difference is the axis of the discussion around the determination of values in the concrete form of prices of production. Marx recognizes that it is a determination that exists in Volume 1, but he says that at this point it cannot be explained, the determination cannot be shown: we must continue to look at a series of concrete forms that lead to this.

This discussion, which is one of the axes of Marxist economics, about whether it is resolved or not, whether it is resolved with a model of simultaneous equations or iterative equations, whether it is resolved empirically, whether it has no resolution but it does not matter... All of this is based on looking at a process in which there is a qualitative transformation that has a certain quantitative manifestation... It is: value is quantities of labour, but its form is never quantities of labour. And this from the point of view of logical representation is unacceptable. Take that discussion, the complete development, end the beginning of Volume 3, and both from the point of view of those who defend Marx's development and those who criticize it, they say that it is invalid because the concrete model does not satisfy the postulates of the simple model, and therefore the simple model that mentions quantities of work is either false or trivial. One finds this within Volume 1 when one passes from the substance of value to the forms of value.

Alejandro: Juan, the last thing you raise seems to me to be explicit when you mention this quantitative incongruity between values and prices, and qualitative incongruity between what is a commodity and what it is not, and even so it has a price with respect to land. It is already mentioned there, but it seems to me that other determinations such as profit, which does not appear at that time, and therefore neither the rate of profit, are deployed.

JIC: Marx puts it in these terms (he replied in a letter that...): everyone knows that commodities are not exchanged in proportion to quantities of labour in the capitalist mode of production, but in proportion to the capital that has been advanced to produce them in relation to the time that this advance has lasted. But this cannot be answered so far, the only way to be able to answer it is to continue accompanying that development. All discussions about the transformation of values into prices of production, instead of accompanying development, seek to reduce it to a construction of models, of relations of measurement.

Alejandro: I have another question. I have heard of proposals that come from the USSR but now they are supported with a different tone, and that is this question that there can be an exchange of commodities without there being a valorization of value. I don't put it in other terms because it seems to me that it will arise at the end of Volume 1 and it is related to this. In my opinion, in these proposals there is an interpretation of a leap between chapters III and IV, which are caught on that appearance.

JIC: Marx, I don't remember if in a letter, criticizing Proudhon, he says something like: they want the production of commodities without the consequences of the production of commodities. But let's leave it for when we move forward. Until Chapter III, what we have is that commodities can only be exchanged because they contain an equivalence. And when we come to Chapter III we find that the way of realizing equivalence, where there is no immediate unity between production and social consumption, the way of realizing value, is the exchange of *non-equivalents*.

Again, a logical representation cannot admit this, it has problems in this situation. To the point where Ricardo says to solve it: we must differentiate between the natural price and the market price. Ricardo in the prologue says directly that he is not going to deal with that, that what he is looking at is normality in its purity. Neoclassical economics has solved this, and that is why it can make the critique of Smith or Ricardo by saying: what manifests itself in supply and demand is the preferences of consumers with their budgetary constraints: therefore, commodities, so to speak, are always sold "for their value" because they have no more value than what is being revealed in exchange. And what we found is that it is the opposite of what we had when we started, because it is the necessary form of a content that can only be realized in the form of its opposite.

In chapter III, when we looked at the functions of money, in chapter I what we had when we looked at use value is that this is a process of human life, and when we saw that it is the bearer of value we saw that it is a process of production of use values mediated by the production of value. And this was at the beginning of Chapter III, of the function of money as a means of payment. When we come to the function of money as treasure, which springs from that of money as a means of payment—because it was sold but not bought—what appeared is that this is not a production of use-values mediated by the production of value, but that this is the production of the social relation. but not to exercise it, but *as such*. When we saw the function of money as a means of payment, we had that it is produced here to

produce the social relation, and to put it in the place where it is exercised. And this is commodity production. And then we have to look at what concrete form it has.

When we look at what concrete form it has (I am going to make an absolute leap), we find that in order to be a producer of commodities one had to be a private owner of one's own means of production. And then the concrete form is that in order to be a producer of commodities one must be separated from one's own means of production, one must be a doubly free worker. We had that the private character of labor is fully expressed in the fact that the producer produces without cooperating with anyone. And when we were advancing, even in absolute surplus value, but especially when we moved to relative surplus value, what we were faced with is that from this social relation, from its qualitative need, developments emerge that have a certain magnitude as a manifestation of their existence, but what changes is qualitatively what work consists of: from being a simply individual activity, to be a simple cooperation, to be a cooperation all poured into the same commodity, to be a differentiated cooperation in the division of manual labor, to be a cooperation mediated by the development of machinery. More and more, what we were seeing was the socialization of private labor. We started with the purity of private labor, and what we were deploying is that it is actually social labor. In the capitalist mode of production there is no other way in which private labor exists than by collective workers.

And if we do, as a synthesis of the proposal that we advance, beyond the development that Marx makes, and we said: what was the producer of commodities in chapter I? A free individual, a private owner of his means of production, who has full control over his individual labor, but has no control over the social character of his labor (he does not know whether he is doing something that is socially useful or not), and therefore has to submit his consciousness and his will as a free individual to the social powers that the product of his labor has. What that individual knows, how that individual recognizes himself as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism, he knows that what he has to do is to produce value.

And the commodity producer, at the point at which we arrive, is not a free individual, but a collective of doubly free individuals, who have full control over their collective individual labor, and have full control over their collective individual labor, but have all control over the general social character of their labor: they do not know whether they have generated a social use value or an object devoid of use value from the social point of view. That is why they have to submit their conscience and will as doubly free individuals who have a collective power to the social powers that the product of their labor has. But the product of their labour is no longer simply commodities but *capital*: what they have to produce is surplus value.

We did not raise any simplifying assumptions: what we did was to accompany the power of the commodity. What it shows us is this: we have been reproducing the movement of this social relation from its simplest and purest form, the simple production of commodities as the purity of social labor done privately and independently. And now what we have before us is the contradiction of a private

labor that is permanently socialized, the contradiction of an alienated consciousness that now needs to be objective and at the same time reproduce itself as an alienated consciousness.

What we did is, in my opinion, the reproduction of the concrete through thought. It is the reproduction of one's own subjectivity through thought. That he got here, that he still faces forms abstract enough to be able to answer very limited with respect to the question he had at the starting point. But that these things now, the first thing they have is that... its antagonistic relation is not with the capitalist, but with capital, and secondly, that this antagonistic relation does not spring from nothing, but from the movement of this social relation. We have already seen the class struggle, the antagonistic relationship between the universal capitalist and the universal worker, the relationship of citizenship as a relationship of solidarity between classes, the state as the political representative of the total capital of society, and we have even seen now how the antagonistic relationship between buyer and seller of labor power is within the working class itself. So, we have the development of an enormous deployment of our concrete subjectivity, but we need to continue advancing.

Among the things that at this point we cannot answer, because it did not appear, is: why do we do this? Why could we face this in this form? Why, if general scientific knowledge says [...][246], were we able to face each other? And here one can give two answers at the level at which we are [...][247] The first thing one can think of is that we are a bunch of piolas, very intelligent people, very alive, and that the others are stupid and do not realize what we realize. And we would have stopped at an appearance. Or we can give ourselves as an answer: we still can't answer why. What we can answer is that we know ourselves as free subjects alienated in capital, that we are determined as historical, political subjects, with a scientific consciousness, and that all this is a necessity of capital, and that it pushes me, that as a personification of this social relation, I find myself in need of giving it body.

The other answer you could give me is because I'm a living barbarian, and then I don't need to know anything anymore because I already have an answer for everything. And the answer is the other way around: I need to go on moving forward in order to be able to answer what concrete need of capital I am the bearer of when I am confronted in this way with my own social relation, with my own subjectivity [...][248]. We can face it because we are alienated in capital, it is its own movement that is taking shape in the advance we are making, we are not alien to alienation, but it is its full expression. For some reason that we cannot yet account for, capital needs to deny alienation and produce a consciousness that recognizes itself as alienated, and that advances in its freedom through it. Why this need for capital? And that is what lies ahead. I don't know if they want to raise something.

Javiera: Does capital need to deny alienation, and also does this opposite, on the other hand, produce subjects who know alienation?

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[246] The recording is cut off.
[247] Inaudible, but it seems that it clarifies as if the first possible answer is ironic.
[248] I have advanced these lines, they are from a clarification below in discussion with Javiera.

JIC: It's that when you know you're alienated, you're denying your alienation. Instead of having a fetishistic consciousness, I have a consciousness that knows it is alienated, therefore I can operate by knowing my own determinations. And it is the basis on which I can say that this is a need of capital and not a need of mine. It is not that it sprouted from me because this is the opposite of capital, but that it is a necessity of capital, which carries this contradiction. And for something that I can't answer... I cannot answer two things: why it is my turn to personify it, and why capital needs to deny itself.

Javiera: And the last thing, why? Why does he have this need to refuse, where does that question come from?

JIC: Because I ask myself about my subjectivity and I say: I face this. What I see is this, I can't explain why capital has this need. I may ask myself why he has the need to annihilate himself, or the question is: where is this headed? It is the socialization of private labor, and this is the fullness of the capitalist mode of production. If private social labour is specifically proper to the capitalist mode of production, and is the negation of social labour as such, why does the capitalist mode of production engender an ever greater socialisation of private labour? He is denying the private nature of work. Where does that go? I have to find it in that contradiction, if private labor is socialized, it is destroying itself, and yet this is the way in which the private organization of social labor is reproduced, it is not an external negation. But at the same time, within it, private labor is increasingly ceasing to have the attributes of private labor. [...].

Ivan: Why does capital need us to be able to see directly this social relationship and the form that alienated consciousness assumes in such a lost place of the global accumulation of capital? Why does it not happen where capital socializes private labor more, in Europe, the United States or China, but in a more "peripheral" place like Argentina? where would it seem that capital is continually colliding with its own limits?

JIC: First we have to answer what is the need for capital to produce this form of consciousness. And, at that point, we can ask ourselves why it happens in a certain way, what are the concrete determinations that produce individuals who need to face this question in the way we are doing. It can produce it in one place or in another place.

Iván: It's like the question of ... that it would seem that where capital is accumulated, another language is spoken than we speak, up to that barrier at that point [Laughter].

JIC: Of course, you have to ask yourself once you answer what it is that is carried in that form of knowledge, of the production of one's own consciousness. Why there are specific "moments" in the movement of capital that are more likely for this form of consciousness to develop than others. I have tried to give a very general answer, but... I'm going to restrain myself. Let's continue discussing the method.

Javiera: I was left with a doubt about an example that you said very specifically, about virgin land, that in appearance it is a commodity... What?

JIC: But that comes from Volume 3 [Laughs].

Javiera: But listen to me: you said that on the surface it could look like a commodity because it has a price.

JIC: Because it is not a commodity: it is not the product of socially necessary abstract labor materialized in a private and independent way.

Javiera: But when making a similarity that it can be a commodity, is it because it has a price and it could seem so?

JIC: The look it presents right away... Take neoclassical economics: it is useful and scarce, so it has a price. And then it is like any commodity, there is no difference because utility and scarcity are present both in the virgin land and in the gnocchi of the friend's house. It's this appearance.

Javiera: The question I have there when you gave the example is that we do not start from a concept, when we got to know the commodity we unfolded it, the quality, and there you said: "if we had started from the virgin land, we would not have been able to arrive". And my question is, why wouldn't we have come to recognize that it was a commodity if we had started from that simple unity and deployed it? For me we would have come to discover that it was not.

JIC: What I said with this aspect... If we had started with virgin land, we would have said: determination is answered by some attribute that virgin land has, which explains why it has a price. And the attribute of virgin soil that may explain the price, which comes into a relationship with ten dishes of gnocchi, is that the two are equally useful and scarce. And we would have had to say: yes, but they don't have this attribute.

Now, why did I make the reference? This is why Marx says that it may seem that it is an *a priori construction*. Where does Marx start from? Of something that *is* a commodity The problem is that at that point one does not know what a commodity is: one is wondering what it is. The role played here by the product of social labor with respect to the path that one is going to take, is that he knows that he is confronting it with a commodity. Then he says: of course, when you later discover that it is work, you have already cheated, because you started with something that you already knew was the product of work. The complete answer with regard to virgin land can only come after having looked at the general rate of profit, after the process of formation of the general rate of profit. Until it gets there, it could seem that we are facing an *a priori* construction, that I discarded the virgin land arbitrarily, I have no explanation as to why it has a price and I chose those things that I knew had value. This is the reference that Marx makes to this appearance.

We are not dealing with an *a priori*, we started from the simplest determination and advanced on concrete forms. And the price of virgin land is one of the most concrete forms that capital takes. So, one can only deploy it [...][249], and then virgin land has no value but it does have a price. And even, at a certain point, one can answer why the vulgar conscience or for the scientific conscience that stops at appearances, cannot distinguish the virgin land from the products of labor. Because in reality what it is going to do is that if I look at it now in the concrete form, it seems that it is the same, and the individual who stops at this and does not ask himself any further cannot distinguish one thing from the other.

Alejandro: In this process of analysis that Marx does, at a moment before exposing it in *Capital*, he was confronted with what virgin land was, and the very deployment of the commodity led him not to put it now, right? I am wondering about the determination of the virgin land, and if it were put in now, one runs the risk of staying with the appearance.

JIC: In his development there is a point (I don't remember the steps well) at which he... I am going to put it with the specific question that appears. In the prologue to the *Contribution*, he recognizes two issues as key to its development: one is that of poaching, the collection of firewood. And when it goes along... For me, first of all, what it says is that now it turns out that the private interest is imposed on the State as the representative of the social interest. But when he continues to advance, there is a point at which he says: the problem is not territorial property. Because the poaching was immediately aimed at landed property, not capital. And the problem is capital. And then, in the process of analysis, it is that it is advancing. And there is an expression that for me is very clear of that process of analysis, of deployment. Because in the process of knowledge, as we accompany a development, we have a guide, we are going in one direction.

Marx exposes bits of analysis that for me is to show the unity of the dialectical method. In the original research, one cannot simply say: I came to the simplest determination and now I come back, and I come back... And I never get out of the way. When you start to come back, you find that the development you are doing does not lead you to recognize something that you had found in the analytical process, but something else. So, he has to start again in the analytical process, go through the unfolding again to discover where it is that what he had been looking at when he asked about the need, in reality had not been answered because of the need for this.

So, in Marx's development this is raised with respect to poaching. But there is a very clear example in the *Grundrisse*, which was the last draft for the *Contribution*, where he does not begin with value or commodity. He starts with money, arguing with a Proudhonian who argues that money should be replaced by hourly bonuses. And it is in this unfolding that Marx... he is not going to make the analysis of the commodity, but he is going to begin to look at the commodity as a social relation (I think abstract labor has not yet appeared). And when he finishes that draft he says: the commodity is (something like that, I don't remember) a unit of use value and

[249] The recording is cut off.

value: we have to go back to this, start here. And from there he does not start by discussing money but the commodity as a unit of exchange/use value.

So, that is the process of doing the analysis, the synthesis, finding the insufficiency of the analysis, that what the synthesis shows is not shown by the analysis, the need to do the analysis again, to unfold the synthesis again, until one can go from the immediate concrete to the simplest concrete through analysis, and now unfold the need for that simpler concrete to the concrete from which it started, but no longer as an immediate concrete but as a known concrete.

Aristides: About the postface where you said that it may seem like an a priori decision in this quote that you brought... Isn't it possible to think in the same sense of other texts by Marx from his youth? These days I was thinking about the *Manifesto*, it is also something that appears as a proposition in some way... And it brings me to this, that sometimes I wonder why the last thing he ends up doing is writing *Capital*, and what method is there that [there is] not in other works of his. He develops his research and at one point he begins to write *Capital*.

JIC: I don't want to answer you in detail because it's one of the things I'd like to leave for last. But very early on he realizes what is at stake, so to speak. But it cannot lay the foundation. It's like: that's it, this is what I have in front of me, but you have to unfold the content that leads to this. And in my opinion, *Capital* is that deployment. And when you get to the second-to-last chapter, it's going to appear immediately. One can even make the parallel, and ask what is still a leap in development. But that is when we get to the end. Something that one can still say: in that which one had discovered very early, but whose foundation one cannot lay, one puts it in *Capital*; but one can look at that foundation and say: here one can go on later on a concrete form, which in the text of *Capital* is put in very generic terms. [...].

[Method IV. Science, Metaphysics and Art][250]

[Responding to Alejandro] Well, what you raise here is this accusation of metaphysics. […] The first thing that comes to me and that I think one has to take is that the universal consciousness proper to the capitalist mode of production – at least from its origin to the present, and presumably for a long time to come – is a consciousness that has to deny itself the possibility of confronting its own condition of free consciousness because it is alienated in capital. So, it is an awareness that we saw in the development of the method, of the discussions, which is going to take the form of logical representation, both in terms of the method as a power of knowledge, and in what makes the method as a negation of objective knowledge. And this is going to be the normal thinking within the capitalist mode of production, at least as an expression of the necessity of commodity fetishism as a general consciousness.

What is going to appear, then, is the denial of the possibility of subjecting the very starting point of logical representation to criticism. It is the appearance that something is a mere immediate affirmation, and that, therefore, nothing can have a content that is not immediately equal to the form, even though (I had said this the other time) it is an expression of vulgar knowledge that appearances deceive. And yet, when one enters into the discussion regarding forms, the method of knowledge, that is erased. And what is said is that the starting point is the principle of identity, it is the principle of non-contradiction, it is the principle of the excluded third. And when one says: "Well, but let's subject this to criticism," the general position is that it does not even occur to me that it should be subjected to criticism. And then the thing is reversed.

And the aspect that makes the affirmation of the impossibility of knowing, when an individual is saying that it is impossible to know objectively, the first thing he should do is doubt himself, doubt that it is impossible to know objectively. And yet, the scientific conscience that is the product of, or that sustains itself in this method, is willing to consider that well: this is so. There is a division... I think I passed on to them the two works of mine, in particular the one about the CICP and the form of political action. But there is a division of social labor, there is a mutilation of knowledge. On one side are those who are going to accept logical principles... and not even the logical principles: they will accept the axioms even if they kick themselves with logical coherence, but it is accepted because it is self-evident, and then they will develop all the relations of measurement; and those who make up the other side of that unity, those who are going to maintain that it is actually impossible to know objectively, are separated from them.

And they are both going to move, each one in his own field, without having to worry about what one says or what the other says, each one is going to look down on the other: one because he is going to consider himself a serious scientist, the other because he is going to consider that he is a prisoner of his ideology and that is why he believes that he is a serious scientist when deep down he does not know

[250] From here until the end of the workshop, my transcription was *assisted* by the use of an AI. The physical energy savings involved allowed me to fully reproduce the discussions.

what he is. he may be a serious scientist. And then, to that consciousness, when one is confronted with the evidence of one's own determination and one's own contradiction (I will put it in simple terms), it humps its life. Because it begins to have no place in the normal and general movement of social production, in particular of the social production of scientific knowledge that carries ideology.

Last time, I don't know if it was you, Alejandro, who had asked why... when I said that it is not a problem of brilliance, that one is alive and the others... but it is a need of capital itself to produce individuals who face their condition as free subjects because they are alienated, at this point in the historical development of the capitalist mode of production, that is not the general need, it is a tiny need that capital has. And then it's going to show up in individuals who aren't... I'm going to put it like this in a simpler term: that's going to be presented as a need of fucked-up, twisted individuals, that while the normal individual accepts that well: this is the principle, then I accept the principle and I build on that; This cannot be known objectively: well, I accept that it cannot be known objectively... and that's it; The possibility of developing the confrontation of one's own subjectivity with this content that is the opposite of its form requires individuals who do not accept this more or less immediate response. And an individual, in order for him not to accept that, has to be an individual... Let's call it "problematic."

And yes, because that is what concrete determinations are. The capitalist mode of production produces problematic individuals all the time, everywhere, because since one is the bearer of this contradiction, one is always confronting oneself. Since one has to make one's appearance of being an absolutely free individual sprout its absolute social interdependence, consciousness (we saw this at the beginning) is the bearer of this determination, and consequently generally produces individuals who carry a contradiction. Now, that this contradiction also takes the form of confronting and asking ourselves about the necessity of that contradiction, so far it is a very clearly limited need. Later, when we go further, we can return to this question of how fucked up you have to be, in what concrete forms that fucking is carried.

But then, the individuals who are... That is normal consciousness, that is the general form of scientific knowledge. When they are confronted with this, that they do not question their method abstractly, what they are questioning is what they are as a subject, it seems impossible to them to accept, it is unbearable for them. So the way to answer is: it cannot be that there is other scientific knowledge because by nature objective knowledge has the form of a logical representation. And any claim that this is not the natural form of that knowledge must be unscientific and must be metaphysical. In reality, what is metaphysical is to say that every real form is not an actual existence that has potentialities to realize. And yet, to deny this, that is metaphysics. Because if I look at myself, I recognize myself as the bearer of that determination: I am an actual existence that I have powers to realize, that I have to realize continuously and that I have to govern that realization because these powers are the reproduction of myself as a concrete form. "Inanimate" objects carry potentialities to be realized, but they are not the subjects of the realization of these potentialities because they do not reproduce them as with concrete forms, what it does is destroy them as concrete forms.

Well, this is inevitable. I was reading a text that was passed to me by an Argentinian who has resumed his Marxism after youth, now when he has retired from his work activity, and he comes to put in the text, he changes the term "substantial"... Quote where Marx raises the reproduction of the concrete by the path of thought, he puts it as the *reconstruction* of the concrete. And reproducing is not the same as reconstructing, precisely the term reconstruction implies putting together elements that are separate, reproducing is accompanying with thought the unfolding of the same real process. And then, even quoting that, he says that Marx's method is a hypothetical-deductive method, where he starts from the simplest categories and then raises the simplifying assumptions. And one says: you have just read what Marx recognizes as specific to his method... And it turns it into a logical representation automatically.

I think I said it last time: every Marxist is going to say without the slightest doubt that every social form is historical, and one says: the form of knowledge is a social form. It is the way in which the relationship between the individual organs of the process of social metabolism is established, it is the way in which one knows oneself as such an organ. And the ways in which this organization is carried out have a historical character, and therefore the method of knowledge is historical. In addition, one looks and scientific knowledge was not born three million years ago, a million years ago, it was not even born 15,000 years ago: it was born very recently in the historical development of the human being. And for those individuals who say that every social form is historical, immediately what must be constructed is a logical representation, that the hypothetical deductive method is proper to logical representation, and what Marx does is a logical representation, which is natural and when one presents this development it occurs... Can you imagine that I have heard this type of proposal that you put there, Alejandro, and what they answer you... Nothing, they look at it that way, cannot overcome that character, that naturalization of the scientific method.

Order is, in concrete development, in my opinion: it is not that one first confronts the scientific method and makes this naturalization, but that one first confronts one's subjectivity as a free individual because one is alienated in capital and that is when he says: but then the method of this knowledge does not have this form, it has this other form. So, this is to be expected. It is the opposite of philosophy, it is objective knowledge, logical representation can only be founded on philosophy, outside of itself. What we have here is a knowledge that is being put into being, facing its own determinations. Well, here's the answer: metaphysics is reducing the concrete to an immediate affirmation, that's metaphysical. The ideological use is to present that as the physical and the questioning of that immediate affirmation as the metaphysical.

That's why I never start with the method, saying: well, here the method we're going to use is not that of logical representation. It's when we start to move forward that I say: well, but here there is a contrast with logical representation, we didn't do what logical representation does, we did that. Why, what scope does it have? Nothing, let's go on looking, asking ourselves first about the necessity of necessity and then unfolding that necessity in its necessary concrete form. Because

if one poses it from the outset in front of normal and general consciousness, the questions are: "well, but that is another logical representation", or "that is metaphysical". And so, the way to appropriate it is to deploy it yourself, facing the need to deploy it yourself. Once it is unfolded, one looks at it again and says: well, but this is a different form from the other; I stumble over the problem that objective knowledge is impossible because all I can do is to put things in external relation to each other because I cannot accept that there is an inherent necessity in things. But if I recognize that things are carriers of a potentiality, then I immediately have to say: well, what I have to do is to look at how the development of that need manifests itself, not to introduce an external need that forces a link between things that are incapable of being linked.

[...] It is the other side of the accusation of determinism, because denying the existence of determination is something else. It is *self-evident* that one is determined—to use ironically the terms used by logical representation. If one were not a determinate subject, a bearer of needs, then nothing, one could not even ask what one is, because one is determined to ask oneself what one is, if I am not a bearer of potentialities and those potentialities do not have a need, then I cannot even ask myself about myself. First, if I think that I have no potentialities, I would not have to ask myself about my potentialities, nor could I ask myself, because at the moment I am asking myself, what I am realizing is a potentiality that I have in the previous moment (to make this abstract separation). In the previous moment I had a kind of pure power, I could ask myself about my determinations; Now I am asking myself about my determinations, it means that there was a power to be realized that I am realizing. And then it is the necessity of resorting to the reduction of determination, to simple immediate affirmation, to the appearance of simple immediate affirmation.

So, to say that there is determination, is conceived as: well, there is only that... — which is what corresponds to logical representation—... there is only this immediate determination, this immediate need. And when one answers: no, this is the possibility, that is the general form of determination. It is a need that is in potency together with other potential needs that are incompatible with each other as being realized at the same time. Well, that's the general form of determination. And freedom is the ability to govern those determinations in a conscious way by knowing them. But I mean, one is confronted with what is normal consciousness in the capitalist mode of production today, so one would expect to be treated as an abnormal. Yes, Alejandro, you had said the second question, but you preferred to leave it.

Alejandro: [...] Well, it is present in what you mentioned in the last one, but in general it corresponds to the whole path we did in the workshop. In other words, we begin by asking ourselves about our subjectivity in the capitalist mode of production, not in the abstract, but as a form of our political action. And in this process of asking ourselves, we find that the most immediate in the commodity, as the simplest form of the capitalist mode of production that determines our subjectivity, let's say. And at that starting point, which when we started appeared to be arbitrary, in reality now appears to us as the necessary starting point, right? However, at one point the need arose not to stop like this, but when we ask

ourselves about what the commodity comes to solve, we find that it is the concrete historical way of governing the process of human metabolism. And by asking ourselves about this process, we arrive at the generic human being, at social labor as a conscious vital process with respect to the appropriation of the environment. Appropriation that is not static, but, well, advances in it with the development of the productive forces. And at that point we find that the human generic being is nothing more than a particular form of the existence of nature, in which all that potentiality is materialized to transform the rest of them consciously, right?

And so we went on and in short, in a moment, I don't know if it appeared, but well, this question of materiality that, ultimately, the determination itself is the matter. And to try to close, my question is: with what we know so far, that the capitalist mode of production is an alienated form in which human life is governed, which in turn is a form of existence of nature, if we do the opposite way, it is generated as an appearance that the same natural existence is contained in the capitalist mode of production. I don't know if that appearance, in addition, is fed because we are already facing the result, right? With all the mediations faded in time, or materially present as vestiges. And this is not very clear to me, that's why the question came. I do not know whether it is a question of knowing how to distinguish the potentiality in realization from its actual existence, as a realized power, in which the form of possibility must mediate, as you just said, or there is an additional question that arises from that same immanent relation that must be considered.

JIC: I lost you at one point, because what you want to propose escapes me. You got to a point where you said (I don't know if the terms were): but it appears as the other way around, that the capitalist mode of production would be...

Alejandro: I propose what the question comes from and what it is related to as well. That if one goes the other way, that is, when one returns from human existence, as a natural form, and goes through all the deployment, it generates that appearance that, well, since the capitalist mode of production is a way of governing human life, it is as if it were already contained in what nature is, the existence of the capitalist mode of production. And that also appeared to me in a text by Marx that poses it, not in these terms, but it does say that in reality what appeared as what produced work, which took nature and transformed it, well, work is also nature. I think it was in the *Criticism of the Gotha program*, and it caught my attention, it's like this appearance is present. I don't know if I explain myself now.

JIC: [...] Let's see if I understood at least the first part. You say: well, the capitalist mode of production is a "form" of nature. Only when we look at it... Human existence is a natural process, and we distinguish what is proper to the process of human life, because the human being affirms himself as a historical subject who transforms the rest of nature into a means for himself – the one within his reach, it is understood. So what do we need to distinguish? The historical character, the condition of the historical subject of the human being. So, everything that is in reality *natural forms* proper to the human being as a historical subject is what we are going to call "social forms". Naturalization consists precisely in attributing to the human being the same conditions, the same attributes that any other form of

existence of nature has, and then, considering that everything in human life is explained by the condition of subject of nature. And the inversion of this is to attribute to the other processes of nature the conditions of reproduction of the human life process. I don't know if it's clear.

So, first of all, all the processes of human life are a form of existence of nature. But [...] as a historical subject, we differentiate them with a generic process with respect to species, the specific differences of the processes of nature as social processes, as social forms. Now, social forms are all forms of nature. I don't know if this is clear. We cannot reduce them to forms of nature and indifferentiate them, but at the same time they are forms of nature. What we are doing here is a natural process, a whole movement: we are breathing, we are emitting sounds, we are maintaining the temperature of our body... Thought is a process of an electrochemical nature, it is a natural process, but it is a form of nature that is only proper to human subjectivity, to the condition of the human being as a historical subject, as a generic subject that produces itself. So, we cannot reduce it to a simple form of nature, but we have to look at it in this generic condition, and in that condition we give it the name of social form, of social relation, of social process, but it is a form of existence of nature. I don't know if this is clear.

In nature, in the origin, I don't know if it is 15,000 million years that the Earth is considered to have its origin, it is clear that at that time the capitalist mode of production does not exist as a concrete power. And 2000 years ago either. What exists are the powers that are going to generate modes of production that are concrete forms of the powers that existed — let's go further back — 15,000 years ago, that are going to have as their power to realize the generation of other modes of production that are not the capitalist mode of production, that are going to have those other modes of production in turn as a power to realize that is their own — which does not exist as a power to be realized in the previous mode of production—the engendering of the capitalist mode of production. Time is a determination of matter. And then, matter develops. At a certain point in that temporal attribute, there is no concrete potentiality to engender this. There is the concrete potentiality to generate those things that it generates, which in turn have potentialities, and this is the development of that transformation. I don't know if this is what answers your question and I don't know if this is actually around what serves your question.

Alejandro: Yes, they were the two questions, it happens that I confused them into one and well, in part I think that asking the question ordered a little and well, thank you for your answer, for not being so clear.

JIC: No, but it's not that question, it has nothing to do with acknowledgments. It is this process in which we are producing ourselves as social subjects. I don't know if there is anything else they want to raise about the method, about these things...

Aristides: Regarding what I was just before, the previous conversation, it stays there... [...] What you put in your work as "Marxist logic" or, well, the method as Marxism, right?

JIC: Yes. I say: I am not going to encompass all Marxism in a single block because they look at themselves even differently, but they appeal to the method of logical representation, yes, that is the... The name itself says that it is a representation of what another individual has produced. They take what the other individual has produced and represent it to them. That is why it has the name "Marxism". And actually, the discussions in Marxism all revolve around whether I am interpreting Marx correctly, the discussions are: I am interpreting him correctly and others are not interpreting him correctly. But the method they use is logical representation. Yes, but I said, excuse me...

Aristides: No, no, it's fine. I feel re-identified with this because I kind of studied and faced questions that have to do with the development of the class struggle, and there is a whole current within Marxism, and there are all these debates, right? But, let's say, from some texts by Lenin, where he begins by analyzing confrontations and analyzing class struggle and the general strike in Moscow, as well as in texts by Gramsci, by Luxemburg, there is a whole current here in Argentina of the CICSO[251], which at the time I had a lot of training there in those productions. And I was researching, bringing a little bit of my experience, I remember this, of developing that... let's say, in principle of "field study" where the information is collected and the information is added, analyzing the confrontations as units of analysis... or from the classical methodology taught in the university, that is, with a hypothesis and looking for the observables.

And there came a time when you were analyzing a confrontation in a given period, etc., and you couldn't say much more than that. It's like there was a limit where you couldn't say much more than: well, here is a group that are all unemployed, and here is a group that are students and... You were faced with a certain limit, and I remember arguing with comrades: well, but we have to say that these are actually working class, or talk about what class fractions they are. And it shocked us, I was shocked by that, we can't know from here, it's like I was facing this. And, well, apparently there was a crisis with all these tendencies, but I remember that these conceptions also raised the question of the objectivity of the social sciences, and it was opposed to academia, even reformism and... even to Marxism more... also on the academic level, branding them as subjectivists. And this question was posed of the need for objective knowledge and, by analysing the confrontations, how to detach an objective strategy beyond the subjectivity of the working class, of the subjects who intervene in political action, etc.

The question is: what would be the criticism? Although I see the obstacle from the method, what would be the...? That is, because Marx was even vindicated as in this famous phrase of, well, "they don't know it, but they do it", as if some questions of this objectivity are recovered, but it remains there, as if you can never advance on where all that subjectivity springs from.

JIC: Let's see, I don't know if I followed you. There are two things in what you were proposing. I take this one first: in the world of scientists who "produce knowledge" (I don't know how to put it), if you go to the world of physicists, to

[251] Center for Research in Social Sciences.

take that example, Prigogine, Nobel Prize in Physics, appeared questioning objectivity; But to normal physicists, all this discussion is completely alien: one has a hypothesis, makes the observations (in the case of physicists, they do the experiments) and this is objective knowledge. And if a postmodern sits next to him, he is a blackmailer. What he is going to propose is that he fulfills an ideological role. The discussion there is: well, but here you looked at this on the basis of what was repeated. What was repeated has already happened. Second thing: what was repeated is normality (to put it in immediate terms), and one does not know if what is going to happen next is normality or not. So, the argument that through logical representation one cannot affirm that one has objective knowledge, for someone who takes logical representation should admit it, although no one who poses himself as a serious scientist is going to admit it.

Regarding the strategy... It is kind of complicated for me to discuss it, because it is the argument with my brother that we resolved many years ago that we were not going to continue having to maintain our good brotherly relationship [Laughter]. But this is it. The questions about the strategy of the working class [...], the question is, why is this thing that appears as a strategy determined? Why did they opt for *this* or this? What does it express about the movement in the process of capital accumulation in that area that one is looking at? Why did they face this question? Actually, what I think they are ultimately looking for is to find that suddenly there is a strategy other than "institutionalization" or something like that, I don't remember if that is the term. And we have had this discussion because my brother asks me a lot if the two approaches are complementary. My answer is: they are not complementary. He kind of says: I look at concrete things, and you are looking at the general movement. And they are not complementary because if one were to say that one wanted to unite the two things, one would have no choice but to unite them externally.

Because here is an affirmation of a consciousness that does not spring from what I am saying about why that consciousness has the form it has. But well, this was one of the aspects of the discussion for Lenin, for Luxemburg... In general, they say: it is a representation and it is objective knowledge. He is confused, I think in part, as if to say: it does not spring from my subjectivity. But in reality, when they are cornered, what they say is: well, but ultimately there is subjectivity because the veracity of the theory cannot be verified; nor can it be falsified, so each one chooses where to walk because his subjectivity leads him to walk on this side and not on that side. And from the logical point of view, the criticism that a part of the logical representation makes of itself is unobjectionable. And it is done only for ideological purposes, it is not done to surpass itself. Because when that criticism appears, what does not appear at the same time: if this method has this problem, then we have to overcome it. And the answer that this whole proposal makes is the opposite: it is insurmountable because this is natural and then all we can do is discuss objectively and the truth is given by the community of scientists, because they seek the truth, etc. The second aspect has gone to me now, what was in your proposal.

Aristides: It was present there in the answer you gave. I just didn't know how to put it into words, but I was coming that way.

JIC: Because the image of strategy is an abstractly free consciousness. What he chooses and who...

Aristides: Of course, because posed in this way, it appears as something objective because it is neither in what I say I do, nor in materiality, in the movement of capital, but it is externally of the subject. So it has the appearance of a target... this is what Marx called "objectivity," says Marxism. But in the end it is also something constructed.

JIC: I can synthesize it with something that is, again, appealing to the personal thing, but that synthesizes this issue in some way. Both my brother and I come from a generation with different... Apart from having lived through the same initial situation with different courses in disagreement, but it is a generation where we know a lot of people who were revolutionaries and were more Marxist than Marx himself, so to speak, and who are now the opposite: columnists for La Nación, national deputies for the Republicans of I don't know what Wednesday... and we no longer discuss it. At one time the discussion was: did you see so-and-so? And so my brother, the reaction about so-and-so is, "That's a traitor." And my proposal was: that is an expression of the determinations of the process of capital accumulation in Argentina... He was never clear about what he was looking at.

A specific case, who gave workshops on *Capital* at the CICSO, and who today is a member of the National Academy (I think) of Economic Sciences, or of History, who was an advisor to all the radical governments... And I attended that workshop, too. So when we talk about that so-and-so, this jumps out. My brother says: "He had things clear, he is a traitor, because before he did not understand and he did it conscientiously." My approach is that he never understood what was in front of him, it was simply the expression of each moment. At that time you had to give workshops on *Capital* and the individual gave the workshops on *Capital*. And then what had to be done to reproduce itself as a certain social subject (in this with my brother we sometimes agree) was this, and he did it because this is what he is. He is my political enemy, now: I do not see him as a traitor, I see him as a political enemy.

But that somehow synthesizes this: you have to look for the determinations or start from the appearance, that there is an objective knowledge that this individual had and rejected it to occupy a place... whatever. From their point of view, that individual can *be judged*. From my point of view, one has to *explain* why that individual has been what he was, but for which one has to explain what the society of which that individual is an individual organ was and why then he had the transformations that he had. But hey [Laughs], don't make me say things that would be recorded and that I'm going to regret later, but I must admit that, not consciously on his part, I owe my way of looking at things like that partly to him. But hey, it stays like that. We move on. Is there more to all this? If there is no more, let us move on to the section on wages as the price of labour.

Aristides: Excuse me, Juan, with the method I have something else. At some point, in these last meetings, the comrades, I think Alejandro, had spoken of

individuals who, being engineers, for example, having a training in logical representation, also lived together or expressed another form of representation as religious. So, from there, what I think, as I am a music teacher, I am now in that environment, of artistic representation... But you spoke of artistic representation, let's say "unconscious", in primitive communities, with the theme of expressions in graphics, in stones and cave paintings as a form of representation. But then one sees that, as a form of representation, it develops and continues in society. And obviously all artistic expression as a form of representation survives today. There are many expressions that are already becoming a commodity in art in general and thinking about music, for example, rock, commercial pop that begins in England, that begins to internationalize and where the commodity of music begins to have a global orientation, which occurs with English rock above all and then with American rock. as in that process where music is clearly a commodity, beyond what music is for John Lennon, Paul McCartney, I don't know, for the producers of that commodity or the consumers. Of that, beyond that, it is a commodity, clearly because of what the so-called music industry is.

But beyond or beyond that, what I see is how the method of formal logic, in how it appropriates that, or how it valorizes, how it produces that commodity, seeing, for example, music theory, academic musical language, which is basically like an inheritance of classical music, right? That is what tonal language is left with, that this theoretical construction is also used for musical teaching, for musical training and reproduction in schools and musical institutions worldwide, and well, the method of music from that moment on is already that language. What I think, and I ask is: it is still a language, a logical construction, and therefore it will also have certain limitations to be able to reproduce the real and to account for the concrete and certain movements and processes of the concrete.

I think of some issues that happen to me as a musician and educator, when one sees some phenomena of musical folkloric expressions, which arise from that specific practice that I associate with the development of the craft and the study of an instrument, which has some expressions such as tango or rumba, where one sees that there is a development from generation to generation, as an oral transmission of all that, but there is a development of that ability – in that sense I speak of trade – and I see how there is a difficulty in logical thinking sometimes to transmit that, to explain it. For example, to teach tango at school, he faces obstacles and an impossibility. For me I am not very clear about how to transmit it and how to move forward in that, but I see that difficulty. So, the question I bring up is that the difficulty and impossibility of accounting for the unity of the life process in general, the human metabolism, on the part of logical thinking, is also transferred in other areas or representations, in this case in artistic representation. That's like a question, capable, mega artistic.

JIC: Yes, I don't know if I'm going to be able to answer you something. Because there one has to look... different things appear to me, but I don't know if they do what you are proposing. The last thing you were saying about teaching and learning seemed more accessible to me, but I don't know if what I'm going to say has anything to do with it or not.

There are several things. In the first place, artistic representation does not pretend, I believe, to be an objective representation. On the contrary: it appears to spring from the pure subjectivity of the individual. That subjectivity that is social, and therefore will produce a lot of points of view depending on what instruments it has to be able to make its representation, what development material production has in general, to which corresponds the capacity to produce certain "sound objects". But I understand that precisely the condition of interpreter what it says is that it is an activity... Beyond creation, musical performance is mediated by the subjectivity of the individual who is making it. Where, moreover, it is as if it had the character — and I think it has to a large extent — of manual labor, because deep down one types, or blows or whatever, and manual labor is very difficult to teach, the only way to learn manual labor is to do it.

Because they can give you a general explanation of: well, you blow here, you have to squeeze here, there... And no one can tell me: you have to apply, I don't know, 15 "grams" of force on this place, squeeze and with the exercise you will realize how much it is tightened. So, from the outset, I understand that teaching has this difficulty, of a manual activity that on the other hand is very complex. Because simultaneously you have to be doing a lot of movements, also with a rhythm, with a... Then acquire all the... And that it is also assumed that one does not play one piece, but is capable of playing a number of pieces, with which one has to absorb that subjectivity, the ability to transform, either by reading or by hearing, what was in front of him into the right sound. So, on the one hand I think there's this.

On the other hand, I don't know whether to call it, the "quantitative character" of music, because in the end it is a quantitative problem, in the sense of half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes, fusas and semifusas: it is a question of measuring the duration of the sound. And then that can be objectified, in the sense that I have a piece that tells me: I have to give it this duration. Then it is always mediated by the activity of the subject who can say: well, this duration yes, it is more than half of it, but I consider that this is so much... I, if I remember correctly, my futile attempts to learn to play the piano [Laughs], of which there are not even remains: the half note does not have a fixed duration, there is supposed to be a canon that says that it has more or less that duration, but that later... So there is all a... And there is even a vibration of the air, which has a certain amount and that, by writing the piece, I can standardize the amount of vibration that is going to be produced.

So, I suppose that the difficulty of teaching is because you have to put together this double character of knowledge that is objective, quantitative, but that can only be carried, can only be executed, so to speak, through the subjectivity of the individual who is representing something to himself... Because *it is a form of knowledge*. Any artistic expression is a way of representing the concrete that one has in front of oneself, and every process in which one is representing the concrete that one has in front of one and on which one is going to operate, is getting to know that concrete. Then one has more powerful forms of knowledge for a certain action, or it can be argued that there are more powerful forms of knowledge for other forms of action, but it is clear that they are forms of knowledge. Perhaps the

problem that you raise of the difficulty of how to structure it and how to transmit it, is linked to this double condition, because if one has to teach engineering to another individual, it is also mediated by the subjectivity of the other individual, but... To put it this way: the Pythagorean theorem is the same for everyone, so one cannot do it faster, slower, with more or less force. It is the Pythagorean theorem, and he is going to reproduce it with objective purity. I don't know if this answers what you were saying, if it has to do with the difficulties of producing knowledge that has certain attributes and in addition to intervention, at the beginning there was another question which is that of the commodity form.

Now, music has had the form of a commodity if you will, what do I know... To listen to the minstrels, the recipient in the transition from feudal society, to the composers who had the patron, there also appears a relationship of personal dependence, but which is mediated by money, to a large extent has the character of a commodity. There is an aspect that is interesting for the workshop, but that did not appear before. There was a workshop where there was a plastic artist, and this appeared very early in Volume 1: the commodity character of artistic production and the determination of the value of the artistic product by the socially necessary abstract labor time, but when one looks at it in the development of the capitalist mode of production, today it is openly evident that this commodity is not paid simply for its value, but it is a commodity that has the one whose producer is exceptional. Because the mass of musicians, of plastic artists, thanks if they manage to sell their commodities, even to something resembling the value of those commodities, hopefully sell their labor power for value.

But it is clear that this type of product where the subjectivity of the performer or the author intervenes, fulfills an ideological role in the capitalist mode of production: to produce—in very broad terms—an identification with the miracle of which the exceptional individual is the bearer, who by nature is exceptional because he has a subjective attribute that others do not have. and that serves so that instead of wondering about one's own misery in the conditions of sale of labor power (it is the same as soccer players), one worries about the life of the individual. And in the capitalist mode of production, differentiation has the form of disposing or not of the general social bond, and then these individuals come to dispose of masses of the general social bond that have nothing to do with the value of the commodity they produce and sell. […] And I don't know if with music, because maybe it doesn't lend itself as much, but what this plastic artist proposed is that it serves to launder money very strongly. But of course, the work of the plastic artist has an objectified existence that is not exactly the same, which can be treasured and instead music...

Alejandro: You mean a painting that has two colors painted on it and you sell it for a million, two million pesos?

JIC: Not only that, but a Van Gogh painting that sells for $100 million to be kept in a safe. So, it's a mixture of hoarding with... And they paid the 100 million? What happened in it? The specific case was that of Botero, a Colombian painter who was supposed to be very highly valued, I don't remember why cartel in Colombia. This appears, which is the same with soccer players, how much the transfer is in reality,

who gets to keep what appears there nominally... Every business in the capitalist mode of production can lend itself to speculation and to the movement of this general social relation beyond the simple content it has.

Aristides: And a smaller question, also about what Alejandro was talking about. I was struck when we saw cooperation, manufacturing and large industry, and I was directly confronted with the form of production of music the question of manufacturing, in contrast for example with the plastic artist, where there is *one* —although there are more collective expressions—, but in general, music, as if in itself —except for some expressions of troubadours or isolated individuals—, but in general worldwide, historically, they are collective expressions. And it's not cooperation because... I don't know if I should say "work", but from what we have been reading... I don't know if it's exactly that, but clearly there is a craft or a development, a differentiated skill: not all musicians play the same instruments, but the assembly of each instrument and each musical line produces a unity that is the result, the final product is what sounds, is recorded or performed, but it is only one. In that sense I saw it as a manufacturing process.

JIC: It is a process of differentiated cooperation, like manufacturing, it is not a simple cooperation that is undifferentiated.

Aristides: And in the case of sports, let's say, also in that sense?

JIC: Professional sports?

Alejandro: There are many sports, the same; athletics is not the same as football. Something similar happens in athletics as the plastic artist: he is abstracted in himself and it is a question of ... in the end he is the one who makes time. Then, in football, this differentiated cooperation appears.

JIC: Yes, it depends on the type of productive activity, of sporting spectacle, to put it in the strict terms of what it is. Well, I don't know if there's anything else.

Alejandro: The class left with questions.
JIC: Well, but it's very interesting.

Alejandro: What I had there to ask Aristides if he had anything in mind about the development of the artificial intelligence that is commanding that development. He grabs, for example, a line of text, enters it and takes out a box that is linked to that line of text, which can be from two words to an entire poem; and also the production of musical pieces. I don't know if there's anything there that can be thought of.

Aristides: I understand that it would be like an instance of incorporation of machinery where the work of man would become the attribute, but I don't know more than that. I always remember a reference by Marx in the introduction, in the *Fundamental Elements*[252], I think, that refers to art in Greece and quotes some

[252] The *Grundrisse*.

texts, especially literary art, by Homer, I think; but it is a form, let's say, literary form of Greece where he says: this is not going to be repeated, the conditions that gave rise to that work are not going to be repeated, which does not mean that we cannot enjoy them, something like that, he says.

JIC: Yes, "like when you look like a child" or something like that.

Aristides: Exactly, yes. In that same text that talks about the monkey and the man, the reference you once cited...

JIC: The anatomy thing...

Aristides: He raises that and nothing, I don't have more than that. But it's good because in some way there is for me a kind of approach to the artistic and that is yet to be investigated.

JIC: Well, I don't know if it makes much sense to try to start with the section of...

Alejandro: That's it, we'll have to start the first time it comes.

JIC: Yes, to spin it, because otherwise it will be cut into nothingness. I think it is the most sensible thing to do.

Alejandro: In what remains, we could make a recap of the last chapters. I don't know, let's say, I understand that to be able to return and resume.

JIC: The thing is that this chapter... (Sorry, it's not a chapter, it's a section that is, if I remember correctly, 4-5 chapters, all very short) ... it does not appear simply flowing from previous development. We look at absolute surplus value, from absolute surplus value one can say that relative surplus value flows, the form of cooperation, the division of labor, manufacturing, machinery, etc. And here is what is going to appear... Because there one is also advancing on concrete forms. And these chapters are going to have, this section, has a basically analytical character, where a question appears that did not arise from the previous one, but that is necessary and one can even say this: it is an aspect that is not even going to play a role (at risk, but with little time, I hope not to say nonsense). that when one looks at what follows from the development of Volume 1, this is not going to play a role in that development by itself, but it is something that is going to reappear in Volume 3 in particular, with a whole significance of why the value of labor power does not appear as the value of labor power.

In Volume 1 it will play a role with respect to the consciousness of the worker in the process of his own reproduction, which is the next section, of why the worker cannot see himself as... how can the exploitation of the worker by capital, which has already appeared in development, not be manifested in general? And it appeared with absolute surplus value, and in reality this discussion of wages as the price of labor could have been following the development of absolute surplus value, except that we talk about what happens to the productivity of labor in relation to wages, with forms of wages. And since the productivity of labor was not yet

deployed in absolute surplus value, the movement to the productivity of labor would have implied a leap. What's more: what Marx is going to say immediately when he starts is: the reality is that what one is going to look at here would have to do with the specific study of wages and their forms (as if to say that it does not correspond to general development). And then he says: but here what we are going to look at are the most general determinations.

So, there is going to be a leap in the sense that we are going to say to ourselves: the last thing we looked at was the possibility of the worker being replaced by machinery in the development of capital of not finding a buyer. We saw what happens to the worker, manufacturing as the last refuges, what happens with the development of machinery in agricultural production and so on. And this is a unity, so to speak, in itself, where things linked to agricultural work are going to appear, about national differences that we are not looking at in development itself. So there is no cut... Well, then the last thing we saw of the general development was the question of the working class becoming a subject that is in charge of the organization of the production process of capital with a scientific consciousness, which is not in the development that Marx makes in *Capital*. Which means nothing... As a review, I escaped...

Alejandro: Okay, it appears as a kind of clarification, a parenthesis.

JIC: It is something that must be said, but it does to the forms, it does not to the content, although it will appear in the development of the forms: this form is the one that allows the worker to be overexploited by prolonging the working day, it hides the exploitation... But it is the reference to this form... It's the same thing that happens when you start looking at relative surplus value (it's not the same thing, but it's as if the structure of development plays a similar role). When he looks at relative surplus value, he says: we have to look at the form, this is the content, the increase in the productivity of the labor of the workers who directly or indirectly produce means of subsistence for the workers. But in order to deploy this, you have to look at the form, you have to look at the competition, but it's only to look at it, to have this in front of you. The structure is similar to: this is this, it is necessary to stop because it is not as simple as we have been proposing, because the form that the change in the value of labor power takes through the appearance that what is sold is labor and that what is paid is the price of labor, it was hidden.

And for me one more thing is important that is not deployed in *Capital* That Is... I think I said it last time: the productive power of the labour produced by the means of subsistence, etc., increases, the value of labour-power decreases, and consequently the price of this labour-power should decrease for the worker. The price is an amount of money, it should be a smaller amount of money. Well, if in some historical epoch decreases in the nominal wage may have appeared, in the concrete historical movement the decreases in nominal wages disappear? To the point that in the case of Argentina the reduction of the nominal wage is formally and legally prohibited. How, then, does this process take place, in which the value of labour-power decreases, and consequently the nominal wage of the labourer must fall? And I wanted to add that in the development. But then we are going to look at what follows from the reproduction; and in reproduction what is actually

going to be at stake are determinations that... We are going to talk about the value of labor power, what happens to the value of labor power.

§6. WAGES

Chapter XVII. Transformation of the value (or, as the case may be, of the price) of labor power into wages.

Well, basically in the previous chapters, before stopping at the question of method and so on, in particular in the chapter on the relations between the value of labor power, the length of the day, the productive capacity of labor, we were seeing that they appeared with the quantitative manifestation, and consequently we were looking at the exteriority of the forms that the movement of the process of valorization of capital is taking. But we still have to go a step further on this externality, and this is related to the form of the value of labor power, which does not appear as the value of labor power, but as the price of labor.

And then, Marx is going to make a reference to what appears, for example, in Ricardo, which is the natural price *of labor.* And the proposal that he is going to make is to speak of the price of labor is a contradiction —so to speak— in terms, because labor is the substance and the immanent measure of value. But value is the labor that materialized in a commodity that is represented as this attribute of changeability that the commodity has, and labor is not the product of labor. Labor is productive action, it is not a materialization of labor, and consequently, to speak of the value of labor is absurd with respect to the determinations of value, it is an empty expression.

He is going to make a reference to the value of land by saying that virgin land, free of improvements, is not the product of labor, and therefore has no value. But what is going to appear with this expression of the price or value of labor? It is the concrete form in which the content of these concrete forms is presented to the subjects of this process of social life, which appears inverted. And here he makes that reference to economics, where he says that in almost all sciences, it is known that many times things manifest themselves in an inverse form of what they really are. And the only science that ignores this is economics. With what we talk about the method and we discuss by discussing, we did not specifically get involved with the so-called natural science, but that is where Hegel makes strong criticisms of physics – we had talked about this – saying that the reason for the phenomenon is given as what is the very manifestation of the phenomenon.

And so, we find the expression of how the value of labor power is presented as the value of labor. And what is going to appear in this is that the division of the working day between a part where there is necessary work and there is surplus labor or surplus labor is erased, and the evidence that there is a paid part and an unpaid part. In the form of wages, of the price of labor, it will appear that all labor is paid. Here there are some people who make some observation saying: well, work is never paid because what is paid is the labor force. But when one is looking at how this movement manifests itself, as if what is paid for were work, then the expression that there is paid work and there is unpaid work is hidden and valid. And Marx is going to make the contrast with what happens with forms of work

prior to wage labor and he is going to refer to this. All the slave's work seems to be work... Not unpaid, because the slave's work is not paid or unpaid, but it seems that the slave will only work for his master. And on the other hand, under the guise of the price of labour, it seems that the labourer works all the time for himself. And then it is concealed in these two figures that the slave works a part of the day for himself, because he has to produce his own means of subsistence, and that the wage-worker works a part of the day for the capitalist, he works for free.

And what is going to appear as a necessary determination... That is to say: from here will arise the need for the representation of all the labor time of the salaried worker as paid labor time, because this corresponds to the legal condition that the worker has as a free individual. And then it is a necessity of this mode of production that it should be concealed that the worker works a part of the day without receiving an equivalent, that he sells his labour-power for the equivalent, but that this equivalent contains a part of the day that the worker receives nothing in return. All this must be hidden behind the appearance that all the work of the worker as a free individual is for himself. Did anyone want to raise something?

Alejandro: Me, Juan. This need of the capitalist mode of production to conceal this division between necessary and surplus labor is manifested in the fact that when one goes to receive one's wages, it does not appear specifically as the sale of labor power, but for a working day of so many hours, as if one were paid for the work one is doing there.

JIC: Exactly. Here Marx makes the observation that classical economics was almost on the verge of discovering it. And when one looks at Marx's own development, it is a "late" discovery. But when Marx gives his lecture, which is published as *Wages, Price and Profit*, he still speaks himself, not of the worker appearing to be selling his labour-power, but of selling his labour. And just now, and this is from... I don't remember the year exactly.

Alejandro: 1865, isn't it?

JIC: I have the impression that it must be prior to the publication of *Capital*.

Alejandro: Just when I was about to edit it, right? The first.

JIC: It may be from 1865, that's why it's late. And then, sometimes in modern editions of the conference, they've added the value of labor power. But Marx himself has a hard time clearly differentiating where the thing came from, even though it was clear what determines what the worker receives. Unpaid labor appeared, but the expression of the sale of labor still appeared.

Alejandro [Chat]: A curious thing about this text is that it makes no distinction between the private and independent character of the work that produces commodities.

JIC: By that time Marx had already developed the private character of work. Because that comes, although it expands it, enriches it in *Capital*, even from one

edition to another it develops it more, it already appeared in the *Contribution*. And in reality the question that the problem, that the substance is private labor, not private property, as I had been developing until then, is much earlier. In any case, I do not have the text of that in mind; I did have in mind this question of not yet distinguishing between labor power and labor.

I always note the following at this point, which had to do with the question of method and what we had been seeing. Which is: if this is a necessary form of the process of buying and selling labor power, the appearance of the price of labor, why are we confronted with that appearance? And the answer is that the need to confront each other has not yet appeared. So far we continue with the situation in which we cannot account for why the capitalist mode of production—if this is the necessary form of its reproduction—needs to produce a consciousness that confronts the apparent character of that necessary form. But well, then I just point it out here.

So, what we have is this form that erases to the outside, to its manifestation, the character that is proper to the capitalist mode of production, which is the gratuitous appropriation of the labor of others. And when we are confronted with the value of labor power in the form of wages, the price of labor, we find ourselves back... If, when we confront capital for the first time, we confront it in its movement in circulation (Chapter IV), it begins with that and confronts us with the need to account for the elements, so to speak, that enter into this movement in circulation, of what the value of labor power is. how it is that the worker is a seller of labor power. And he ends by showing that we are in the realm of the appearances of circulation and that we needed to enter production to answer each other about the content.

We entered into production, we continued to move in the production of absolute surplus value, in the production of relative surplus value, [...] we got to know commodities, not as simple products of labor, but as products of capital, products of labor that is alienated in capital. And consequently, when we looked at circulation, capital appeared as a mass of money, therefore as a mass of value, which had the capacity to multiply, and it did not reveal the circulation from which its capacity to valorize itself emerged, therefore, a value that engenders more value without having any qualitative differentiation. When we began to look at what happens to it in production and saw the difference between variable capital, which is the only one capable of producing surplus value, and constant capital, a condition for labour to be set in motion but inert from the point of view of the production of surplus value, but at the same time we saw the contradiction develop in which constant capital, Unable to produce surplus value by itself, it needed to grow faster than variable capital in that that constant capital was put into raw materials because it increased the productivity of labor and we saw that that constant capital needed to grow at the expense of variable capital when we looked at the production of relative surplus value as a condition for the increase in the productivity of labor. We saw all these differentiations. Now we return to capital as it is presented in circulation: here the difference between paid and unpaid labor has been erased, in the form of wages the source of surplus value is

erased, it is a proper form of circulation. And with this in mind, we find the ways in which the salary is taken.

I told them: Marx must have known why he divided this section into several short chapters, when he comes from dealing with a variety of concrete forms that correspond to the deployment of the system of machinery in large-scale industry; why here he uses a criterion of purely formal structure, very different, and makes this separation in several short chapters. But well, what we have to do is look at what is following. And what is going to seem is that the salary has different forms, there are different ways of establishing the salary. And again, here he is going to clarify that in reality this corresponds to a specific study on the salary that does not fit into what he is developing, but that he is going to expose the two fundamental and predominant forms of the salary, he is going to stop at these two forms and the first one that he is going to look at is the salary for time.

Chapter XVIII. Time-based wages

In the time wage, the value of labor power is divided by the length of the working day. So, what you are going to have is that all work seems paid because the worker is going to receive his salary based on the number of hours he is working. Do any of them use FCE edition? The old edition, I don't know if it will have been corrected in the new one. Well, the old edition of FCE, on page 455 says:

> [...] labor power is always sold *for a certain time*. Therefore, the transfigured form in which it is presented," and says: "*daily*, the daily, weekly, etc., value of labor power is that of the '*time wage*' [...].

It does not have to say "daily," but "*directly*": the transfigured form in which the weekly daily value of labor power is directly presented is the time wage. In Volume 1 there are relatively few of these things, in Volume 2 there are more, and Volume 3 is plagued with these things in the FCE edition.

What is going to appear next is: the laws that govern the value of labor power now appear transfigured as laws that govern the price of labor, that govern wages. We are talking about the form, not the content, but now the form is going to be the bearer of determinations that are proper to the content, it is not going to be simply what we have seen so far, but the content itself is going to be "served" in this way beyond what is here. And what is going to appear is the extension of the working day in overtime above the normal working day, as a condition for receiving the value of the labor power. What is going to appear is why the extra time of work on top of the normal working day has a higher pay. In the case of Argentina, I don't know if it's still like that, because all these things go... but the extra hour on a working day is 50% more, and on a non-working day it is 100% more than a normal hour of work. And then the wage can be fixed in such a way that only by doing the overtime does the worker receive the full value of his labor power.

The appearance is that the value of labor power is prorated in the normal working day and in reality it can only be achieved with the higher payment received for the extended working day because it is considered that the extended working day implies an additional expenditure of labor power that is no longer proportional to the extension that the working day is having. That since the labor force has already been spent in the normal condition, if that expense is extended, that expense is multiplied, it requires extraordinary wear and tear and that is why it has a salary more than proportional to the extension of the working day. But this can serve as an instrument for the capitalist to force the worker to work an extended working day just to receive the value of his labor power.

And the other issue that is going to appear with the salary for time, is going to play with respect to the supply and demand of this work. For if a worker works a longer day, it did not change: the capitalist has more labour-power, but he does not employ more labourers. Here one has to look at this double determination: there may be a greater demand for labor power when the working day is extended, and yet there is no greater demand for workers, it is the same worker who is extending his working day, it is not that there are more workers who are going to be able to

sell their labor power. So, this differentiation appears that must be made, because... I am going to give a concrete example, when there is the transformation of what is called the "New International Division of Labor", and the withdrawal of productive processes from countries with workers who had a higher value of labor power to workers with a lower value of labor power. or that they are paid below the value of labor power.

As the working day of these workers is extended, the result may be that the new workers incorporated work a longer working day, what may happen is that at the same scale of production there are actually fewer workers working than there were before. I don't know if the explanation was clear. When the European workers are replaced from the 60s and 70s by the East Asian workers, that worker who had a working day of 7-8 hours, is replaced by a worker who has a working day of 12 hours. Thus the total mass of workers who are in the process of production is reduced. Although the total mass of labour-power at the disposal of capital, let us suppose it to be the same, the demand for labourers is smaller. And then this determination appears. And then, as the demand for workers is smaller, the competition among the workers to sell their labor power becomes more acute, and consequently the reduction in that competition reduces the wage, and then this reduction in wages allows the capitalists to extend the working day even further. Is the mechanism understood?

Edgardo: Yes, yes. That is, the same mass of labor power is distributed among a smaller number of workers, which sharpens the competition among the workers and is a mechanism in favor of the capitalist to extend the working day even more.

JIC: This further decreases the demand for workers and sharpens the competition among workers. And here Marx is going to propose one more development, which is an aspect that does not appear in the development we are doing, it is because he goes on to look at the forms of competition. And what appears is that in the cost price, from the point of view of the capitalist, the wage is a component, and then that cheapness that he achieved in the form of... What he proposes is: the price of the commodity appears as having as a component the price of labor, and then, if on this basis of competition of the workers, the capitalist has lowered the price of labor, he says that this cheapening can be given to the buyer. And then this possibility of cheapening labor power becomes an instrument of competition between capitalists. Then, since the capitalist obtained a normal surplus value on the basis of the cheapening of the price of labour by competition among the workers, it may happen that not only the wages, but the commodities themselves appear cheapened through this cheapening of labour-power. In other words, meagre wages and excessive working hours end up becoming the constant basis of movements in competition. And with this we would have the axis of salary by time. And the second form of wage appears, which is the piece-rate[253]; therefore, there is a whole series of figures, the tanners, the medieros, the sharecroppers... They are all forms of time wages, what is called piecework wages. Yes, Alejandro?

Alejandro: A colleague had made an intervention in the chat.

[253] Name of chapter XIX in the FCE edition. In the Siglo XXI it is "piecework".

José Luis [Chat]: What are the "overtime" for if by reducing the working day production became more efficient (I think it was mentioned in chapter XIII)? Wouldn't it be counterproductive for the capitalist?

JIC: First, from that question raised by José Luis, we had this development of the need to shorten the working day due to the increase in intensity. But what appears here is a movement that is coming out of normality, which is why Marx is going to make reference to an "abnormal surplus value" that the capitalist is appropriating through this mechanism. So it appears as a circumstantial movement that can occur, and here it appears as sustained, as possible to sustain itself in terms of cheaper commodities and low wages, but it is not the general movement. Like all movements of competition, they are the ways in which the general movement is carried out, but this is outside the general movement: there is a point at which this occurs, the extension of the working day.

The overtime is set at 50% because in some way an estimate is implicit that the wear and tear of that labor force is indeed doubled, the consumption that must be made to sustain that labor force in operation is doubled. So, if the working day is based on a salary that is not enough with the normal working day, and effectively 50% corresponds to the additional cost that the worker will have to reproduce himself because he was working an extra hour, the result is that the worker is selling the labor power below value. So, we are once again in a situation in which, in the terms we have so far, it cannot be sustained indefinitely. But it appears as movements which, in the competition between capitalists, and in the antagonistic relation of capitalists to workers, and in competition among workers, appear as movements that can develop beyond normality.

Then, in general, these movements... It is as it appeared to us when in the chapter on machinery and large industry we looked at what was happening with manual industries, where what appears is that they are based on the cheapness of the workforce. If we are looking at a relatively universal labor force, that cheapness of labor power has to be paying below value. That labor power is not in a condition to reproduce itself normally, in the long run capital will not be able to dispose of that labor power anymore if one looks at the movement, so to speak, in its purity. But they are the concrete forms through which this normality is realized in the form of strong deviations from normality. I don't know if that's clear.

José Luis: Yes. Thank you, Juan.

JIC: Are we going to the piecework wage or...?

Aristides: Juan, here in what would be the competition for the sale of labor power, is the emergence of this unemployed population, of this reserve army, latent? I don't remember if it had appeared to us, I think something was mentioned...

JIC: It has already appeared, but at the same time in what is being looked at it is not appearing as with a specific role. It has already appeared that this will

inevitably produce a surplus population for the needs of capital. What happens at the same time is that this manifested itself in a general movement of capital, because throughout the useful life of the machinery less labor power will be used than would have been used for that same period if the work continued to be done manually. But in the immediate term, since the production of machinery can enclose a large mass of labor power, it may be that the worker...

It was what Marx criticizes as the "theory of compensation", and what it demonstrates is: compensation, in unity there is none. But what can happen is that, either because with the use of machinery the commodity becomes cheaper in such a way that production expands very strongly; or because the workers who were working manually actually go on to produce the machinery... I always put it in these terms: up to that point what appears is the possibility in the immediate term that the worker will become surplus for capital. In the movement, in the unity of the movement it will become surplus, but in the immediate it may be yes, it may be no. The development of the unity of movement, already posited as immediate movement, comes not in the next chapter, but in the other, in the process of enlarged reproduction. That is where the development and forms of the surplus working population and the scope of that surplus working population appears.

Aristides: In other words, it is a possibility, not a necessity as you stated there.

JIC: It is a necessity that has the form of a possibility when one looks at it there, possibility is a form of necessity. It is not posed that way in *Capital*, it is stated that this is superfluous, but then it is not immediately unfolded what happens to those who are left over. Only later, when looking at reproduction, because that is where you see what happens to the worker who was working and no longer finds a buyer for the labor force because he was displaced by the machinery. But here still that... Marx leaves it as open, it is enunciated, but it is not developed. I don't know if there's anything else.

Alejandro: I asked in relation to the question asked by José Luis, if it would not also be, in that way that moves away from normality with overtime, a reaffirmation of the production of absolute surplus value, as that extension of the working day beyond the normal working day.

JIC: What happens is that if the worker receives the full value of his labor power in the normal working day and then works overtime, and those overtime hours effectively imply an expense not only for the overtime, but in that hour there is an extraordinary expense of labor power, in that case, the worker continues to reproduce his labor power. It is the same thing that happens with all working days that have limitations that go beyond the general norm, not via salary, but night work.

It was in Argentina, because with rotating shifts that rule disappeared, but it still remains for some labor processes in particular. It is assumed that since the human being in his natural state sleeps at night and is active during the day, night work produces an extraordinary expenditure of labor power. There is a greater intensity of work, and that is why the working day, when the daytime work was eight hours,

the night work was, I don't remember it now, but it was not 7 hours, it was 6 hours + 0.20 hours (12 minutes), or something like that, which was equivalent to an eight-hour day. And the same with unhealthy work: there is supposed to be an accelerated attrition of the workforce and then the working day needs to be shorter.

Alejandro: In that case of the night shift, would it be that there is greater intensity in the expenditure of the labor force in the labor process, or that labor force does not manage to recover to go the next day since what is the circadian cycle, which would be that natural component that you mentioned, does not reach full realization, or rather, in a deficient way since we end up sleeping during the day and working at night?

JIC: It is a job that has to count as more intense, in less time it produces more value because there is a more intense wear and tear of the workforce.

Alejandro: I wanted to think about it better, but it doesn't quite close that statement.

JIC: Think of it in terms of a simple commodity producer, who has nothing to do with the value of his labor power. To that simple producer of commodities, who can work less than other individuals, like everything that is abnormal, everything that is out of the norm, has to be compensated on the side of value. Just as complex work recognizes that that individual was producing himself for a time that is abnormal, that is greater than time... When others are already producing commodities and are already selling, they are already receiving the general social bond for themselves, this individual cannot yet receive the general social bond because he has to learn, he has to go on in the learning process for an extraordinary time.

The same thing happens here: this individual is making an extraordinary wear and tear on his labor force, he needs to be recognized for that extraordinary expense. And the way that this extraordinary expense is recognized is that in a shorter day it has produced more value. And then the product of your shorter labor time has to make up for that extra wear and tear, there's more work put in because labor power is expended faster. The individual entered with a normal labor force and it is as if he worked more intensely; he spends it faster, does the work he can do but in less time, in a shorter day and he ran out of labor power. This?

Aristides: At this point, in the chapter on the extension of the working day, Marx refers to the need for certain conditions for the reproduction of these forces, such as the fact of not receiving the sun on the skin, and to some conversations about some clinical studies on this absence of what generates the labor force. And I remember that in that part he develops this that in reality the capitalist has so much labor power of the worker from the beginning of his active life as a salesman, until he finishes and makes all the calculation of: well, suppose that the average work is up to such an age, then in reality he has all these hours, and from there it begins to derive, right? Is it in relation to this, what is being discussed?

JIC: Look, I don't immediately have in mind this calculation of the value of labor power, I would have to look at it in the whole of the worker's useful life. The calculation can be done. Let the capitalist do the calculation... No, no individual capitalist makes that calculation, but that is why I do not have it in mind. Don't have FCE?

Aristides: No, I have Siglo XXI. I was trying to look for him, because in this chapter I understood that he was referring to that... Now I'm not finding the paragraph.

Alejandro: Chapter VIII seems to me, "Day and night work."

JIC: Oh, not in this chapter.

Aristides: In this chapter it says as if we saw it, as if we know this... I'm trying to look up now how it puts it, but it just puts it like, "Well, we've seen this...," and it's still in development.

Alejandro: I think that in the footnote there is this mention that Aristides says of an investigation by a doctor, a certain Dr. Strange.

JIC: Do you have the note number?

Alejandro: Yes, but it happens that I have the 21st century.

JIC: It doesn't matter, the note number should be...[254]

Alejandro: La 94. It would be the second paragraph of section 4, of chapter VIII. Start by dispensing with the harmful effects...

JIC: Is it the one about the working day?

Alejandro: Yes. For me it must have another number. It would be section 4, "day and night work", "relay system".

Aristides: Here I found the paragraph of the current chapter. It's like paragraph 10 of the chapter.

JIC: Well, then I move on to the current chapter.

Aristides: He says: "As we already know, the daily value of labor power is calculated on the basis of a certain length of the worker's life, which corresponds to a certain length of the working day." Well, and yes, let's suppose that the working day is 12 noon, and well...

[254] In the FCE edition (1977) it is note 62.

JIC: Well, but it is not the individual capitalist who calculates the wage in this way. That is the determination of the value of labor power. Now I'm lost. What did they want? I don't know, where was that you said in the chapter...?

Aristides: I think it's in chapter eight, but I'm not finding it.

JIC: Ah, you went back to...

Alejandro: We're making you go around Juan, it's not appropriate. No, the mention that I had mentioned in chapter VIII, of night and day work, is about this question of the natural light that does not give to the human body and the mention of the doctor, but there in that chapter there is not the calculation that Aristides mentions.

JIC: The determination of the value of labour-power indirectly in its normality takes into account what the normal useful life of the worker is, but it is not so simply so. In the chapter, in the section that follows, there is the full determination of what the value of labor power is. It cannot be put so simply as to say that it has this useful life – depending on what it consumes – and that it then depends on how easily capital can sustain its accumulation by replacing workers, wearing them out faster with a lower value of labour power or keeping them in production longer, but that this may apparently imply a greater value of daily labour power. I don't know if you understand it.

In what we have so far, where it does not yet appear what specifically determines how the worker must reproduce himself, is: he needs to consume what his labour-power reproduces, and if he wears it out more rapidly, he has to work less time; and if he wears it out less rapidly, he has to have a ~~shorter~~ [longer] day. But there is up to this point a diversity of possibilities for capital that a worker who reproduces his labor power more deficiently will have a shorter useful life but that it will be cheaper than a worker who reproduces his life that allows him to sustain his existence longer, but who is more expensive because he needs to consume more use-values in order to live more extensively.

So, we do not have to have an abstract calculation independent of the movement of capital itself with respect to the fact that the natural life of the worker is so much, the intensity of labor is so much, and therefore the value of labor power abstractly is so much. It depends on the concrete conditions of reproduction of that capital, one has to look at whether it can sustain its accumulation on the basis of a worker who is deteriorating his labor power rapidly but reproduces it normally for a shorter time, or reproduces it normally for a longer time but that means different wages while he is active. I don't know if you understand the proposal.

Aristides: Yes, it is understood.

JIC: So, when you look at the time wage, what comes up is: given the value of labor power, the time wage results from dividing the daily value—in the simplest terms—of labor power by the length of the day. That's why I wanted to see where he was.

Aristides: No, that's where I found him. It is point 3: "English industrial branches without legal limitations to exploitation", it is the last paragraph of this point just before day and night work. It is chapter VIII, section three, the last paragraph. Start with a date.

JIC: "Killing yourself working... [...]"[255]. Very good.

Alejandro: It is a reference to the accelerated wear and tear of the workforce.

JIC: Yes, but it is nothing more than that. What appears here is the accelerated wear and tear of the labor force, which shortens its life because it wore out more quickly. I don't know what it had to do with the question of the salary.

Aristides: I thought I had to do with it, but now that I reread it...

JIC: He says: the problem is whether or not he is being paid for the value of the labor power and given a labor intensity, what day can sustain that intensity of work without making an accelerated wear and tear on the individual. But I say... Precisely, let's see if linking it with the time salary... What we had is that the hours paid as overtime are supposed to come to replace that extraordinary expense. Then the maneuver appeared, the possibility of the capitalists achieving through overtime an extraordinary expenditure of labor power, which could be that if they do not effectively replace that extra hour, they do not replace the greater intensity of spending that they have, and could lead to a premature attrition of the labor force. But this appears to be a use by the capitalist of an "instrument" which gives it the form of a time-wage, but which does not correspond to the normal reproduction of labour-power, and therefore not to the general unity of the movement of the capitalist mode of production. That wear and tear, that manipulation of overtime so that the worker can reach... in one case it is the value of its labor power, but in another case it is not even reaching the value of its labor power, considering that it is making an extraordinary wear and tear. I don't know if there is anything left in the air about this.

Alejandro: I have a doubt. Since we read that quote, and let it not be external, if in the case of the blacksmith his labor power is prematurely exhausted, would that correspond to a normal reproduction of his labor power, or would we already be back in a question that goes beyond normality?

JIC: The mediation of what is a normal condition, a normal duration and a normal reproduction of life with sustained and sustainable productive attributes appears, because here that reference to 50 years of age appears. Now, is the normal condition of life 50 years old or the normal condition of life...? I mean, how is that normal condition determined? So, it makes the complexity of determining what is normal, whether or not the value of labor power is being paid. I never looked at it like that, I have another problem to raise with you about the value of the labor force and the salary that I was going to leave for later. But here what

[255] Page 199 in the FCE edition (1977).

appears is what normality is in reference to natural life. Because one could... I don't know, we would have to think about it very carefully. I always took it simply to refer to: well, the worker has certain productive attributes, he can reproduce them or he cannot reproduce them, or he cannot reproduce them continuously; Has the normal development of these productive attributes been able to do so? But here "normal" means what appears as universal, let's say. Have you been able to fully develop them or not? And can it reproduce them normally or not?

The question you're asking is: well, he developed these attributes, he can reproduce them normally, and he lives x number of years. If the conditions of, for example, the intensity of their work were different, could their natural life be reproduced for x years + y years or not? But this has to do with the fact that the value of labor power corresponds to a normality governed by working conditions from which a certain natural life results. I don't know if it's clear. I can take natural life as the boss who is going to tell me if this is the value of labor power, or is it the other way around, that I have to consider what are the concrete conditions of the development of the production process and what attributes the capitalist, capital, demands of the worker. The worker has his attributes. Therefore, as necessity, capital is reproducing its life by selling labor power for its value. And a certain number of years of natural life correspond to these conditions. I don't know if you understand the difference. Human beings could live 100 years; if he lives 70, what happens is that he does not sell labor power for its value.

Alejandro: Basically, it is to deploy all the mediations. It will be necessary to deploy all the mediations to show how this natural life of the worker, simply natural, is a moment of how capital reproduces itself.

JIC: Yes, that's why. But when one says that one sells labor power for its value, what governs value and what governs the buying and selling of labor power is capital. And then it is not an abstract "natural life" that determines what it is to sell labor power for its value, but it is the result of concrete conditions of labor, hence comes "natural life." And then one can say: he is not reproducing his labor power under normal conditions if his natural life cannot reach what is the norm, which is the general condition. The working day would have to be adjusted to exist at a higher intensity, so that its natural life can be extended like the natural life of any other individual.

Looking at the question, I tend to consider that it is this condition. There is no abstract natural life that one says: if it is not attained, it is because labor power is selling below value; but there is a natural life that results from the reproduction of the productive attributes of the individual, and the development of the productive attributes of the individual with which capital requires it at a given moment... Not being surplus, because that abstractly put up to that point can give rise to: well, there is an availability of individuals, capital wears them out at an accelerated rate, and then that is the value of labor power, that the individual, instead of living 70 years, lives at 50, because in short, capital has someone to replace it with because it has surplus. Purified of the fact that this condition may be based on the fact that capital has too many workers, then what is natural life in the capitalist mode of production is determined by the also normal movement of capital.

Edgardo: In other words, capital needs workers who live less than others because of the same productive attributes that it requires of them.

JIC: No. The fact that capital makes use of workers who live less time than others is linked to the surplus working population, to the sale of labour power below value. Here we always have normality as the expression of what is the movement of reproduction of capital that flows in normality. So there is a normality in the intensity of work that, when one has to do an extraordinary intensity, its normality takes the form of having a shorter working day. Because what is the normality of the reproduction of that labor power is that it has this natural life, that is what springs up but what I want to put is this: it is not that because it has this natural life, then this is the norm.

What I have seen so far is that capital requires workers with certain productive attributes, those productive attributes must be developed and reproduced: this corresponds to a certain natural life. So, the normal thing is to achieve that natural life because capital has demanded from that individual, consumed the labor power of that individual in conditions that equate him with any other who has that natural life scope, and that then appears as what corresponds to the sale of labor power for its value. If capital consumes that labor power at an accelerated rate because it consumes it with greater intensity and does not replace that accelerated consumption so that that individual has a shorter natural life, then we are seeing that it is paying labor power below the value of that labor power. This would be the determination.

I'm going to put it in these terms, which is half... Throughout the capitalist mode of production, after there is a process of shortening the duration of life, particularly of the working population, by the length of the working day and the intensity of work, what begins to appear to be an extension of natural life. Which is linked to a shortening of the working day and an increase in the intensity of work. What can one see in this lengthening of the natural life process that implies that the worker can no longer die working? When the English working population had an average life expectancy of 30 years, it died working or was already mutilated in such a way that it could not work, but it is as if it died working. Why doesn't that happen today *in the general movement*?

My explanation of that is that the intensity of work is such that the individual cannot sustain that intensity if he is in a natural state of life where he is going to die the day after he stops working. That intensity requires that individual arrive with that intensity in a life process in which he is not naturally exhausted. And then when it can no longer sustain that intensity, it has a remnant of natural life that will continue to reproduce. That is why the need for retirement appears. Obviously, it is a necessity of the worker, but it springs from this need of capital that the natural life of the worker is not exhausted in the immediate process of work, because on the last day of work the worker, if he is going to die the next day, is obviously not in a position to do the work of the previous day.

So, for me this is one of the expressions of what transformations the capitalist mode of production makes where it extends natural life, but to extend useful life. And in reality, the worker works longer throughout his life than the one who died at the age of 30, who had a 14-16h day, but worked from the age of 10 to 30 and died. The worker who today has a life expectancy at birth of a little more than 70 years, since he begins to work at 20, and at 65 years of age is retirement – in Argentina – works more hours for capital than that other worker did. And it is assumed that with a higher rate of surplus value, with which he is more exploited by capital in the whole of his natural life than that other worker was.

How does capital achieve this extension of natural life? What appears is: better nutrition; shorter working day because the intensity is higher, not only the shorter day, but we were talking about the individual's periods of rest, vacations and so on, and the development of medical treatments. All this is not done by the capitalist mode of production in pursuit of the well-being of humanity, much less of the working class. What governs all this movement is the production of what kind of labor power capital needs in its development.

What gives me, with respect to what I was saying before, a question, a doubt, is this: what is it that we have to consider "normal" given the presence of national forms, differentiated national processes of capital accumulation in which the history of labor power is differentiated? And where labor power already appears that comes from the surplus population, in particular from the latent surplus population. Because there capital starts using a worker, who... I always take the example of East Asia, who fed themselves with a bowl of rice but did not work 14 hours a day. And when he starts, he continues to pay him what a bowl of rice is worth but makes him work 14 hours a day. That worker may seem that the value of his labor power is the bowl of rice, but what appears next is that this worker cannot reproduce himself in those conditions and, consequently, it is not simply that his labor power is cheaper, but that capital is consuming that labor power without reproducing it in conditions that will be normal for that same labor power because of its nature. concrete history. That it may be that it is a labor force that, in relatively long periods, has a lower value than that of the other, but that the value is much higher than the bowl of rice. And, in fact, when you look at what was happening in Southeast Asia, it is clear that wages are not still the levels of a salary of a European industrial worker (to take a homogeneous example), or of an American unionized industrial worker, but that they have had a substantial change in what a wage is in those countries to the point (I think we were talking about it the other day) that capital is leaving of China to seek cheaper labor power because the labor power of the Chinese worker already has a value, or a price, let's say, that capital can dispose of cheaper labor power in another national space.

So these are all questions that it is very difficult to be very definitive about how... what governs the sale of force, so clearly what it is... not what governs, but what is the sale of labor power for its value, because it is clear that if fewer hours were worked in general, the natural life of individuals would possibly be longer. We saw the development of intellectual work, intellectual work has a very great intensity. It seems that nothing is being done, it seems that it is not work, but it has a very great intensity. And so, the question is whether, with that intensity, a shorter day

would not be reflected in a longer natural life process. But we return to the previous point: it is the movement of capital that determines what normality is, and in the capitalist mode of production natural life is subject to the movement of capital. And then, it seems like a trap, where he says: well, labor power is being sold for its value, but in reality this individual could live longer if he worked fewer hours and received this same income; So does that imply that he was paid below the value?

I say again: my answer so far is that value is determined by the movement of capital, natural life is determined by the movement of capital. That individual who has the wear and tear imposed on him by capital, if he reproduces himself with his productive attributes that capital demands of him and develops his productive attributes, is selling his labor power for value. Then one has to look at all the mediations that exist of things that seem to be the value of labor power and that in reality come from the condition of surplus population for capital. Did anyone want to say something?

Aristides: And also there, as you say, this thing also comes into play that the moment in which capital needs it, that labor power in certain qualitative conditions, also needs it at a speed, in a time, that sometimes the time it takes to achieve those conditions is also different. In other words, it may not achieve it immediately, and it also takes time to shorten, to lengthen the levels, the duration of the worker's life, to achieve certain qualitative conditions that he did not have before. Well, and that also implies a movement.

JIC: Yes, yes, that's why it's about achieving productive attributes, being able to develop them and being able to maintain them. But when one looks at it even more, what governs when it can no longer maintain them, is linked to when capital says that it can no longer maintain them. When he can no longer sustain that intensity of work... It is a question that I do not remember having raised in these terms. I always took it more simply: it is the value of labor power, or it is not the value of labor power. Here appears this additional complication. Well, I don't know if there's anything else about that or we move on. Let's go to the piece salary.

Chapter XIX. Piece-wages

In the piece-rate wage it is lost even if in the time-based wage the difference between paid and unpaid working time was lost, in the piece-rate wage the relationship with the working time already disappears. It appears directly linked to the mass of product that the working day is going to produce, which does not have a fixed duration, but is open to the worker continuing to work as long as he can. What is going to appear is that the determination of the piece-rate wage actually contains or has at its base the time wage. What is determined is what is the mass of product that can be made in a working day, and the value of the labor power that corresponds to that day is divided by the number of pieces that can be made. And then, there is no longer any proportion between the... It appears as (it is in these terms) that the value of the piece is not measured by the labour-time which was materialised in it, but that the labour invested by the labourer is measured by the number of pieces he produces. And here, again, what is going to appear is how this form of wage operates in the process of production of surplus value. And here the contrast between the time wage and the piece-rate wage will appear, the advantages it has for the capitalist.

And what is going to appear as advantages that work has, the piecework wage from the point of view of capital, is that... I'm going to put it like this, I change the order a little bit. We saw that the use of machinery is what regulates the pace of work. Consequently, the piece-rate wage is not immediately appropriate for work with machinery, because it does not depend on the will of the worker what pace production is going to take. In working with the machine it also appears that the quality of the work which is reflected in the quality of the product also depends to a large extent on the attributes of the machine. Consequently, these forms of wages lend themselves particularly to manual labor, where the capitalist does not have to exercise control over the worker over the quality of the work: the worker imposes it on himself, because if it is not done according to what the capitalist considers it to be, he does not pay him the wage. And then this comes up with this double... "movement". It serves the capitalist to control the quality with which the worker works, beyond having to control him immediately, and to cheat the worker by telling him that he does not have enough quality and therefore he will not pay his salary, or he will not pay it in full. For this reason, it is a form of wage that lends itself strongly to home work, where the worker is forced to control the quality of the work as a condition for receiving his salary.

The other condition of piecework, the piece-rate, from the point of view of capital, is that the worker is forced to intensify his work because the more units he produces throughout the day, the more wages he will receive. So, if the worker who has the salary for time has to be controlled so that that worker does not waste time, capital has to coerce him so that he does not have dead time, in the piecework wage it is the worker himself who is going to be coerced, because if he has dead time, that immediately affects the salary he is going to receive. And then the capitalist is freed from fulfilling these two functions of controlling the quality and controlling the intensity of the worker's work. Yes, Alejandro?

Alejandro: I was thinking that this form of piecework, thinking about how it manifests itself today, has an additional complexity. Because it corresponds to the development of a technology that makes the capitalist not directly put the means of production but it could correspond to the case, I don't know, of Uber Eats or Uber, which pays the worker for each order he delivers.

JIC: That is a form of piecework wage in which—I'm going to put this like this—it has the structure of what home work was. Only this is not at home, it is on the street. But in home work, typically the worker does not provide the raw materials, but he does provide the machinery or work instruments. There is home work with machinery: sewing work is home work where the sewing machine belongs to the worker, it does not belong to the capitalist. And here when one takes the virtual courses of the university, the instrument of work belongs to the worker and not to the capitalist who bought the labor power, which is the university. Historically, the same thing happens with programmers: today there is a lot of work in programming that has the form of a piecework salary: you pay for the product, no matter how much work time it takes, and the worker is the one who puts the instrument of production with which he is going to work and the current expenses he has to be able to function that instrument of production and to be able to do the labor process.

In Argentina, the salary is by the piece, beyond the making of dresses even, at some time... Today the textile industry, taken as the production of fabrics, is a production that is done in an industrial plant; but that of the classic fabric, largely made of wool, is still an industry of home work with machinery. At one time in Argentina there were many advertisements to make floor rags, then at another time there were to make stuffed animals or something similar in all forms of piecework. But where the piecework wage was very present and due to technical development it tended to disappear was agricultural production. Because in agricultural production, what allows the capitalist to pay a piecework wage is to be absent, and the quality control in many of these agricultural productions is done by the industrial plant that receives the product; The price is set by quality, and the piece-rate wage is a part of the product. In the case of milk production, it is paid for the equivalent of so many liters delivered, but the price of that liter depends on the fat content of the milk, and now on the amount of bacteria it has. And then, the worker has to take care of the quality of that product because his salary is immediately linked to that quality although no one coerces him.

There are different ways of coercing Uber, but there were ways in which the sharecropping regime[256], where the worker puts in a part of the capital, the sharecropper puts in a part of the means of production, and the capitalist puts in another part, and it is a wage therefore. Then, in Argentine agricultural production there were the medieros, in the dairy the taneros, the sharecroppers, the vineyard contractors... All were forms of piecework. With the development of mechanization, many of these processes began to have time wages. But the harvesters have a piecework salary, especially where the harvest is manual, the salary is therefore the same.

[256] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aparcer%C3%ADa.

What you were saying about modern forms, the problem that arises with the wage therefore, is that it does not lend itself where the rhythm of production and the quality of the product is set by the machine, and the more the machine is automated, the more independent of the worker's will is how intensely and with what quality he is going to work. And then, where the system of machinery prevails, in large-scale industry, what appears are mixtures of wages for time with the so-called "production awards", which is a wage for that matter. And besides, since he is a collective worker, it is not possible to clearly identify what each one produced, but the production reward makes the workers coerce each other and increase the intensity of work, because if they do not they will be left without the reward. It is a form of wage, therefore, but it can no longer be the main form of wages in large-scale industry where production is heavily automated.

Alejandro: But this advance in the mechanization of the production process that puts those conditions that do not allow a "deviation" of quality, that this deviation of quality is not governed by the hand of the worker to put it in simple terms, is it also renewing the need for other forms of work like this one that I had mentioned? It kind of changes.

JIC: But here we have to look at two things. There is no room for the salary in that place.

Alejandro: Not of course, where the machine is introduced.

JIC: Where do these other forms of home work come from (to put the figure on it)? It is not in the industrial plant. It is the equivalent of what home work historically is, with one more thing: it is a job with a machine, normally, but it has the characteristics of manual work. I don't know if you understand it. The tool is not in the hands of the worker, but in Rappi[257], in Uber the worker is sitting on top of his tool. And it has the conditions and attributes of manual labor (until they make self-driving cars).

Alejandro: The Teslas, they're coming.

JIC: But so far it is a process where the subjectivity of the worker intervenes in the quality, in the speed of the production of the product. Outside the scope of collective labor—because they are also labor processes that have the character of individual labor—they are individual workers who are in a process of simple cooperation. It has the character of the competition that occurs between workers who are in the process of simple cooperation: that if this one works faster than me, they are not going to buy my labor power and they are going to buy it from this one, so I am going to work faster, pedal faster than the other and I am going to be kinder than the other and so they buy it from me me and not that other. So he has all those conditions.

[257] Food delivery app: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rappi

Now: all this work arises to a large extent because the surplus working population is multiplied. They do not arise in the abstract at a time of an enormous demand for labor power that capital does not find how to satisfy, they arise in areas where the surplus working population has multiplied, and they are clearly forms of work of individuals who are not selling their labor power for its value. So, there one also has to look at whether this is not what plays in the resurgence of these forms of wage relations. Not because in the system of large-scale industry this resurfaces, but because the system of large-scale industry has produced a mass of surplus population that can only sell its labor power in precarious conditions, and the precarious form is this piece-rate wage, even that the worker puts the instrument of production in the place of the capitalist.

So we would have to look at that. And one thing: now there is a form of work that did not exist and that is this work of programming where the worker puts his instrument of production, and it is more debatable that it is a worker who is simply surplus labor power. In any case, we have to consider that much of this labor power comes from India, from Argentina, where there is a surplus working population, and so this wage seems enormously high compared to the situation of its national space, but it is tremendously cheap from the point of view of capital if it did not have to pay labor power from its own national scope. Then all these complexities appear.

Alejandro: Now it's clearer to me. My question now is that the emergence of this form of piecework is directly linked to the increase in the surplus working population, but the way in which this labour force is used in movement, in exercise, implies that it is mediated by technological development. This question of being able to use an *App*, and that application, which are virtual media that are on *Smartphones*, allows precisely that means of production to be dispensed with by the capitalist, right?

JIC: Yes. I believe that because there is a surplus working population, if not, it could not do without that means of production. It would be much cheaper for Uber to buy cars for a fleet, and not for each individual who works for Uber to buy a car at a dealership, the sum of the price of the cars would be much lower for Uber than it is with this structure. However, because there is a surplus working population, it can force that worker to put the instrument of production at the service of Uber.

Alejandro: Of course, if your car breaks down it doesn't matter, let's say.

JIC: Therefore, it would be necessary to see if having to pay the workforce for its value would not make it cheaper for Uber to buy the cars and have the drivers.

Alejandro: That is clear to me, what I was referring to is that this technological development appears as a mediation, it is not that...

JIC: Technological development facilitates this operation. But if one looks at it with respect to the cars, the remises[258] were the primitive form of this structure,

[258] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rem%C3%ADs

and the remiserías always worked with a surplus working population, at least in Argentina. You had a much more limited instrument, which was the telephone, but ultimately it is the same structure: the car belongs to the remisero, and he receives a salary therefore under the guise that he actually gives a commission to the remises company.

Alejandro: This form of piecework also lends itself especially to an ideological form of consciousness, doesn't it? That the person who is driving the Uber does not recognize his condition as a worker.

JIC: Yes, it serves to sharpen the competition between these workers and that the worker does not recognize himself in his condition as such, that he identifies himself as if he were a capitalist of himself, or that it does not even occur to him that there is a worker and a capitalist, that he is an independent producer of commodities.

Let's cut here. Next Wednesday we will finish with the wages, we will start – I mean, I suppose – with reproduction, with the accumulation of capital. That it has that little piece that has no chapter or anything, which is like a section of the section, and then we move forward with simple reproduction.

[II]

So, we were dealing with the question of salary, *therefore*. What we had basically seen was that there is diluted any relationship with time. It has the virtue for the capitalist that the worker coerces himself in terms of labor intensity, and I think that we still lacked what follows. And as for the length of the day, the longer he works, the higher his wage is because he is going to add more pieces to production, and then, consequently, the worker is forced to work without limit of the length of the day. And it also allows the capitalist to put in the worker the control over the quality with which the work is done, because if not, he does not pay him the wage. And also what appeared was that this serves the capitalist as a way of swindling the worker by paying him below the value of the labor power, rejecting the pieces with the argument that they do not have the right quality and so on. There was one thing before, which is: if the hourly wage uniforms the wages for the same types of work, the piecework wage depends on the attributes of each individual, and then there can be very significant wage differences.

Iván: A very small thing that I wanted to tell. The other time I was reviewing the modifications of the labor contract law here in Argentina, and in the original text of 1974 there is a rule on work per unit of work, which is also piecework, piecework. And it regulated that in order to determine the value, that is, the price per piece, the number of pieces that can be made at a normal pace must be computed in an 8-hour working day, and from that establish a salary equivalent to the minimum wage, or the agreement. And it appears in a much more developed stage of the labor movement as an imposition that the labor movement imposes on capital for that type of payment, of remuneration by piece, which they finally end up

measuring by time. Two years later, the dictatorship, that part of the article where it makes the comparison, where it establishes the measurement by time, annuls it.

JIC: Yes, what happens is that, even with that base, the worker has the pressure that if he works more intensely he will have more wages. And since for the worker there is always the possibility of having additional use-values that apparently allow him to reproduce himself better (then it is necessary to see if he does not have such additional wear and tear that in reality these additional use-values do not even replace the additional labor power that he expended). But the "invitation" to the worker to work harder is always present. And then there are structures of that salary where there is no equivalence of salary by time, and in the rural part this was very present because let's say, for example, the harvesters typically have a piecework salary and there is no salary per time. So it is very difficult to compare. But yes, the dictatorship, if it could get something more, it was going to get that more. Now, in what follows, Marx makes a reference to the action of the state in relation to these conditions. Alejandro, did you want to raise something?

Alejandro: Yes. This form of piecework tends to sharpen competition among the workers themselves, doesn't it? I was thinking about how the two workers dispute in the same labor process who produces more, but at the same time to whom they sell, that solvent social need, does not have the capacity to absorb everything that each worker produces. So I don't know, I was thinking of specific cases and yesterday, precisely, it appeared to me in the news of a collector[259] who has his salary based on the number of tickets, and another collector did not allow the people who usually go up to board; he came down with a bat and rebuked him, basically. Or this case that Iván mentioned, which would be a kind of piecework wage with a minimum base if you like, but it is still piecework as is the case with clothing or car salesmen.

JIC: All those who work on commission. Then Marx puts something else in Volume 3, which for me is not exactly. But in principle all those who work on commission are forms of piecework.

Alejandro: Of course, and in the clothing vendors it is quite evident that when you go into a store, if they could, they will grab pineapples to see who serves you.

JIC: Yes. What Marx proposes there is that it exacerbates individuality. The issue of competition between workers does not appear so much as it threatens the possibility of establishing a relationship of solidarity because very large differences in wages appear, and it seems that the difference in wages is not... Or the low wage, it is not that the capitalist imposed it, but it seems that it is the fault of the worker who did not work fast enough, applied enough to that work.

Iván [Chat]: The film *Crimen ferpecto* is very eloquent in the competition for commissions.

[259] Bus driver (from a "colectivo").

JIC: I don't know the film "The Perfect Crime",[260] but I imagine. So yes, it is like it sharpens the individualism of the workers and makes it difficult for them to establish the relationship of solidarity. In any case, we had also seen it last time: the piecework wage has a series of limitations when the pace of work does not depend on the individual subjectivity of the worker, but depends on the machine. Sometimes forms of piecework pay appear with a collective character, such as production awards, but it cannot be a pure piecework wage where it is not possible to differentiate what each one did. [...] When there are technical processes that appear more complex, then in much of agricultural production, when one looks at it in Argentina, where there were forms of piecework wages, those forms disappear and are replaced by wages; especially for the one who directed production, they are converted into wages for time.

And the other contradiction of the piece-rate wage from the point of view of the capitalist is that when the productivity of labour rises, then the piece-rate wage must clearly fall. Because if there is a technical change that allows the worker, let's say, to double the productivity of his labor, and at the same time make twice as many pieces, the old piecework rate doubled his income, and then it is a focus of conflict between the capitalist and the worker. In general, capitalists do not make much of a problem, but where, because of the type of work, there is a need for a coercion on the worker, which does not simply have the form that so many pieces made = so much is paid, begins to affect the possibility of that type of wage. Well, and there is this thing that if the worker extends his working day because he is going to get a higher wage because he is going to produce more pieces, it may be that, far from actually getting a higher wage, in reality the additional wear and tear he makes cannot be replaced with that wage difference because he produced more pieces.

Iván: Something that also happens, Juan, for example, today in many platform companies such as Uber or companies that are dedicated to food delivery (*delivery*, etc.) is, not directly what you point out related to the increase in labor productivity, but it appears that piecework is an element of attraction and repulsion of workers. That is, since the platforms work on demand when they enter a country with the aim of attracting workers, they offer a relatively high payment per trip or per delivery, and when they saturate the number of delivery drivers or drivers they need, what they do is a contractual change, they lower the value of the piecework, that is, the shipment or the trip. and in this way they try to expel workers. And in general, many of the conflicts that occur between workers and companies have to do with these changes in the prices of tariffs when companies need to adjust.

JIC: Yes, they don't even have a major problem lowering the price per piece: they simply communicate that the price per piece is lowered.

Iván: Yes, in fact every time they enter the application they have to subscribe to the adhesion contract and in that contract it appears... [...] Since they work digitally

[260] It is "ferpecto" the original title of the film, as a joke.

logged in by an application, Uber or PedidosYa or Rappi, every day they enter work they have to subscribe to the guidelines, they have to sign a contract.

JIC: It's as if every time, every day, they made a different contract.

Ivan: Exactly. The contract may be the same or there may be a change in the ways fares are paid, in the price of rides, in the increase or decline. In Argentina they do not have many problems, because inflation does a good part of the work, but even so they have had changes that have lowered the tariff values.

JIC: Of course, with the excuse that it's not a salary... Because in Argentina nominal wages cannot be lowered. At least it was, I don't know if it is still in force, the labor law, but I understand that it is. They argue that it is not a salary, so nothing, that since it is like a rate, it is not...

Iván: They do not fall within the employment contract law directly.

Alejandro: It's the boss himself, basically [Laughs].

JIC: Yes.

Chapter XX. National Diversity of Wages

I'm going to make three observations, because he's involved... as Marx stopped at this question when he was developing the most general determinations, and here he dwells on concrete forms that he himself clarifies that would have to go to the theory of wages. But well, here are the most general questions within the theory of wages, which is the form of wages. But now this national differences in wages appear. And in reality, national differences did not appear in many other terms. And here what one has to keep in mind is that... Well, we talked about it several times: when Marx makes the development, sometimes he makes explicit that he is developing a national form, a national space; sometimes it is put as if it were a general determination. We are going to look at it... Here we were seeing determinations, general forms, and now what appears is a national specificity, a specific national determination. And in that national determination a clarification must be made. Marx is going to talk about more productive jobs, national spaces where work is more productive, and national spaces where work is less productive. This means that different production techniques are used.

In Latin America, for specific specific reasons, when we talk about national differences, the image immediately jumps out that this is the country that produces raw materials and the other is the industrial country. And what Marx is analyzing here is not that: they are two countries that produce the same thing. It is not that they produce different types of commodities, but that the problem is that they both produce the same commodity, and what happens with the imposition of the law of value. And here Marx says that the law of value is modified when one enters the national space.

I'm going to put it like this: there are differences between two national spaces; the commodity produced in national space A, when it comes into circulation in space B, since labour is more productive in A than in B, materially contains less abstract labour, which in its national space was recognized as socially necessary. But since in B the normal thing is a lower productivity of labor, when what is produced in A reaches B, it is sold at what corresponds to the determinations of value in B. And consequently, that more productive labor, this product that comes from A, which contains less labor in B, seems to contain more labor. And then it appears as if it were the product of more intense work. It does not appear as the product of more productive labour, for otherwise a value which is lower down would be sold, but appears as if more labour had been expended in producing it. And that is the observation that he is going to make with a caveat.

Ivan: I didn't understand, Juan, I got lost. In other words, why is it not worth less, does it not have a lower price than where...? [...] In other words, [...] A would be the most productive space and B the least productive. The commodities arrive from A to B...

JIC: Which is the same commodity that is produced in B. Let's assume that the gnocchi in A are kneaded with a machine and in B they are kneaded by hand.

Ivan: Some are made in Italy and the other in Germany.

JIC: No, because you already put another type of connotation [Laughs]. But it could be. What is happening?

Let us suppose that value is measured in gold, so that there is no difference, and that gold is not produced in either of these two national spaces; therefore its value does not depend on the productivity of labor in one or the other. […] Let us suppose that the productivity of labor in A and B is the same, and that in both, ten plates of gnocchi are sold for an ounce of gold. In A, the productivity of labor doubles, so that in each plate of G there is half as much work as before. Consequently, now, the 10G in A are no longer sold for an ounce of gold, they are sold for half an ounce. But in B they are still kneaded by hand. And consequently, in B the amount of labor required to produce the gnocchi is the same as before. The 10G in B are sold for one ounce of gold. If the gnocchi producers of A manage to sell their gnocchi in B, in B the gnocchi are sold for one ounce per 10G. Consequently, it will appear that those dishes that involve half the work, will contain twice as much work as they have. As they are the product of a shorter labour time, it seems that in that shorter labour time the labour would have been more intensely expended.

This is the situation so far. Then comes the limit of this. And it is: what happens to the competition, when these gnocchi enter B? Let's assume that before B supplied half of domestic gnocchi, and half of gnocchi imported from A. And now this amount of A comes in, and you need to sell them below what was the old social value in B, at a lower price so that they can be sold. Or in B someone is going to incorporate the most productive technique and then the price is going to go down. So it is: this is valid, says Marx, until competition prevails and we must now sell for what is the new social value. It cannot be sustained indefinitely. Well, this is one of the observations that come with this.

And another observation, which Marx is going to dedicate to Carey, but which corresponds to neoclassical economics, to Austrian economics and which... I am not going to say that "curiously", I put it without qualifiers: that it is implicit in explanations of the theory of dependence. It is the image that wages do not depend on the value of labor power, but depend on the productivity of labor, and that then, where productivity is higher, wages are higher. In the theory of dependency it appears that the effect of the increase in the productivity of labor in industrial countries is not reflected in the fall in the price of industrial products, because the most productive laborers have raised their wages. So this appears that is a series of inconsistencies, because the wage does not depend on the productivity of labor, it depends on the value of labor power, and the value of labor power depends on what productive attributes capital demands and how those conditions of reproduction of labor power evolve or have been evolving. Then, this criticism appears. And Marx, in addition to making the critique of that proposal...

Ivan: But John. There it is also tremendous because it is like a way of justifying the low wages of a good part of Latin American workers.

JIC: That's right.

Alejandro: And sometimes we also fall into the idea that wage increases based on a design are going to increase productivity.

Iván: And it is also a way of encouraging fractionation or the way in which we see the working class fragmented. Because we justify that some have high salaries and others low because of that productivity.

JIC: Yes, there is a reason why neoclassical economics and Austrian economics (a branch of neoclassical economics, but today they are booming and say that they are not neoclassical...), in the determination of wages they say exactly the same thing. That is why what appears as if it were a critique of the capitalist mode of production and in the end falls into this very thing, the proposal of the deterioration of the "terms of trade", that the increase in labor productivity would not be reflected in industrial prices because that increase is reflected in an increase in wages.

And then the other thing that he is going to put on Carey and that is also absolutely valid, is that when things do not happen, as Carey's theory says they should, Carey resorts to the fact that this is the consequence of the "interference" of the state that falsifies natural economic relations. And Carey says (I don't know what he says strictly, but what Marx puts as a reference) that in national wages, taxes should be considered as part of the wages of the workers. And here we have to think that there were no taxes of the kind that today are called by the euphemism of "employer contributions" or "social charges", because that is part of the value of the labor force. Apart from the fact that the capitalist does not contribute anything to the surplus value, the retirement funds are a part of the value of a labor force whose natural life has to be maintained beyond the last day it is working because of the intensity of the work. In order to be able to work on the last day, this work is so intense that the worker cannot arrive exhausted and has to continue his natural life. It is a part of the value of the labor force: it is neither a social burden, nor an employer's contribution, nor a tax.

At that time that did not even exist, so taxes are general taxes for the operation of the state, which Carey put in addition to salaries. So, Marx puts the irony on whether those costs that the state has are not also natural fruits of capitalist development. And he puts back that everything works according to natural laws that are only hindered by state intervention, and then demands for relations in the world market that the state intervene by protecting the "natural laws." Something that is still heard today, but exactly as it is stated in what Carey says and Marx's response.

And the other aspect that also has an absolute validity that Marx is going to take as a result of this thing of national differences in wages – it is not immediately linked to differences, but is due to considering differences – is that... Who is to blame for the antagonisms and social contradictions? The fault lies with Ricardo's theory and that of other authors. That it is not that the cause of the antagonism arises from the fact that Richard discovered the antagonism. I don't know if it was understood, but the same thing that is said today about who is to blame for the social antagonisms: Marx is to blame.

Ivan: In other words: it is the idea that generates the antagonism, not the materiality of the social organization.

Alejandro: It's because you're envious, that's why [laughs], you envy the wealth of the landowner.

Iván: If you don't wear a red ribbon on your wrist, it's not my fault. We must never forget Menger, who in this beautiful paragraph laments that there are still individuals who seek to receive remuneration for working. Menger is very good, because he opposes the idea that work is a sacrifice against leisure, he says that people would work for free, but he does not do it because there are other places where they offer remuneration.

JIC: So we have to eliminate salaries, so everyone works [Laughs]. The perverse thing about this is that in addition, effectively, work is the way in which the human being affirms himself in his condition of being generic. I think that once we talked about how this is exploited later in labor relations — let's put it in these terms — to accentuate exploitation. Well, and the other thing is the synthesis of the justification for not paying. Well, I don't know if there's anything else. I have something else about labor power, about wages, as the price of labor, but I don't know if you want to discuss anything else.

Alejandro: It doesn't end up being clear to me what development is like. It ends up appearing as if externally, or not so much... I can't find that thread, because he has been talking about the forms of salary, and then the national diversity of the salary, it's like there's a leap. Just as it seems to me a similar leap at the end of chapter III, when he begins to talk about world money and not... But well, there it is different because the world money had another form that does not correspond to the one I was mentioning there, but I can't find the thread.

JIC: It's not the same as the world money, precisely because in the world market it appears as if they didn't circulate... Because gold coins were circulating; not gold in bars or bars, as Marx puts it, but in pounds sterling, and even in the form of means of payment denominated in pounds of gold, which I don't know if they were all paid for in pounds of gold or not, but it is possible that they were. But here is all the development, it is what I had proposed the other time, it comes with a development that will play a central role later.

Because here what appears is: this form that has the value of labor power as the price of labor erases exploitation, the difference between paid or unpaid labor. [...] What did you propose when you started? Labor force expenditure is measured in time. And it appears independent even of time in the piece-rate salary. Why did you put it here? You would have to ask Marx, and it will be difficult to do so. And why does it dwell so much on the wage per time and the wage therefore? It shows how the division of the working day between paid and unpaid work is erased, so it makes sense to move from one to the other. When the issue of national differences appears, you can see that he had it in front of him as a question, he uses it to

discuss this Carey. There is always this ambiguity of whether we are talking about the general unity of the capitalist mode of production or of a national form.

When we speak of "state", it is strictly the historical development up to the present day, although there are incipient, rather ineffective forms of an international state that appears as a world state. The state is national states. So, one can also associate the whole development with wanting to criticize Carey. He referred to the state, the national state appeared to him. The differences in national wages is what we see that, empirically, with pseudo-calculation, in this thing that taxes add to the salaries of one country or another, Carey must have wanted to raise something. Then it occurs to me that he put it, since it is, why leave it for another time? The issue is already clear here, it is resolved, we are moving forward. Whether it is for that reason or not, impossible to know, but I believe that it cannot be looked at beyond that, simply a place to put it. One can think of it as a problem that is of circulation, of the form that the value of labor power has in circulation.

But in any case for me there is one more thing that is not present in Marx's development, except... he makes the reference to the fact that with the piece-rate wage, when productivity rises, the base has to be changed, and this is a conflict for capital; then, it ends up imposing "even by force" the salary per time in substitution of the piece-rate salary. But even in the time wage, when the productivity of labor in general increases... The piece-rate wage is when the productivity of the work that *this* worker does increases. It is in the hourly wage that the productivity of labor *in general* increases so that the value of labor power falls. And that is what I want us to stop now, which does not appear in *Capital*.

[...][261] That it may be that in Marx's time (I don't remember, I have series of wages there) the nominal wage fell when the productivity of labor rose. It is very difficult to look at it, because there are changes in the length of the day and so on. [...] And it is mixed with another issue, which we are not going to see for now, we added it in Volume 3. We are talking about something: the change in the length of the day, the change in the amount of use-values that the worker has to consume in order to reproduce his labor power as the technical conditions change, in particular the intensity of labor increases and the productive attributes that the worker's capital demands. So it is difficult to look at what happened to the value of labor power and what happened to what appears as real wages and nominal wages. But in any case, one has to explain why when productivity rises, the value of labor power falls, the nominal wage does not fall. But that's what I wanted to see.

Alejandro [Chat]: In what way does the national diversity of nationals play a role in the unity of the international working class?

JIC: [...] think about this again: what Marx proposes here in the national differences of wages, are not countries that produce different commodities, it is not a situation that is sustained over time, because he says: as long as competition does not make him lose the difference, the law of value is simply imposed. So, it does not refer to any of these issues. Therefore, the different national wages, of course, play

[261] Alejandro asks Juan to repeat, he was cut off.

you in the unity of the world working class, but it plays with another series of determinations that are very far from having appeared so far and that are left to... never. At least in the workshops of *Capital*, because when we get to Volume 3 we are not going to look at that difference either, they are not present either. There are some questions with India, but they do not refer to workers' solidarity, they refer to the questions of balance of payments and the movement of money, of capital lent interest and the circulation of money on the world market. So we leave it there.

Alejandro [Chat]: Is the national diversity of wages what Lenin later takes to talk about a supposed labor aristocracy in some countries compared to others where wages are lower?

JIC: Lenin does appear as the one about... But it is not this, he does not take it from here, because what Lenin is looking at are countries that have different productions. Marx will later talk about countries with different rates of surplus value because there are different labor productivity, but the countries with the highest rate of surplus value are going to be the countries that have the highest labor productivity. In the image, for example, of the theory of dependency or Emmanuel's theory of unequal exchange, the country with the highest rate of surplus value is because it has lower wages; and in the development that Marx is going to make this determination does not appear, but the other way around: the country that has a higher productivity of labor has a higher rate of surplus value because the value of labor power is lower. So, these are all issues that transcend what is present in the deployment so far. I don't know if they want to propose something else, if not...

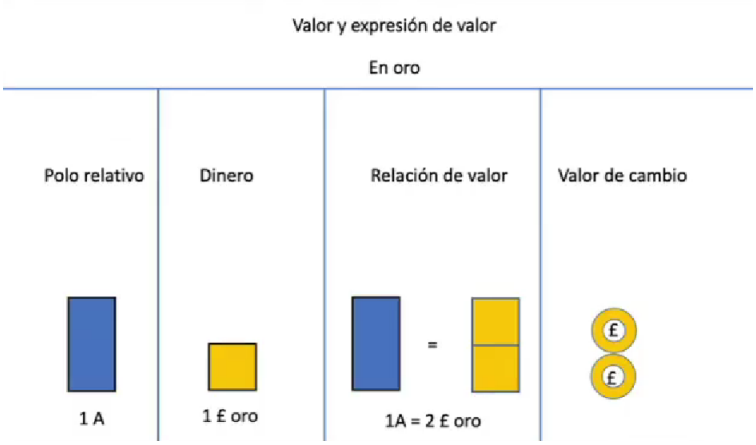
Ivan: What sense does it make to say that the rate of surplus value is higher when the wage is lower, as a necessity? It would seem that capital is accumulating more in Africa.

JIC: That's Emmanuel's theory of unequal exchange, let's leave it. We have to look at all the determinations of national differences, of national specificities, and then answer ourselves on these questions. Otherwise, the treatment is abstract. When we get to Volume 3 we can make some mention of these proposals, but in Volume 3 there are not the national differences that we are thinking about, and there is no such proposal. And what appears is this: the country that has a higher rate of surplus value is because it has a higher productivity of labor. Consequently, the value of labour-power at the same consumption of commodities, at the same basket of use-values, the value of labour-power is lower, the working day is the same, the labour intensity is the same, the rate of surplus-value is higher. But well, let's leave all that and focus on the general determinations. [Presents slides]

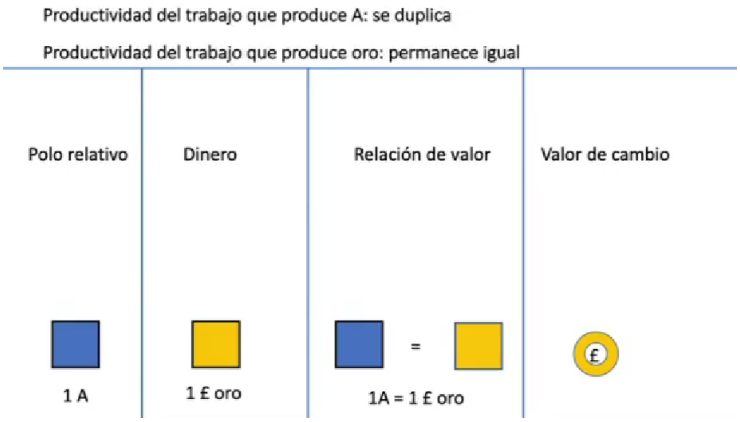
Value of labor power and its expression with the change in labor productivity

To develop this, I take up something that one has from chapter I, which is, what happens to the value of commodities, what happens to value – I start with gold to

make it clearer – and what happens to the expression of the value of a commodity in the general equivalent, in this case in gold. So I'm going to start—it's simple—by taking this [**1**]:[262]

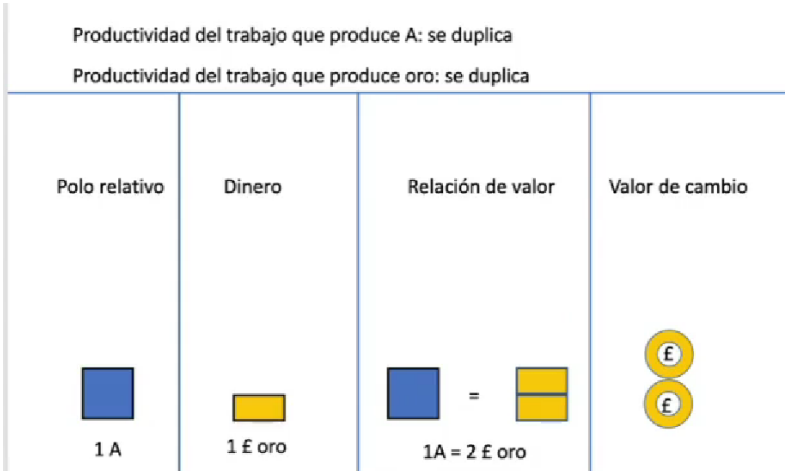


Let us consider that at the relative pole there is a unit of the commodity A, which contains this quantity of labour which is given by the blue column, and that the money which is called £1 of gold, contains this quantity of labour. Consequently, the relation of the value of a unit of the commodity A in gold is that it has the same value as £2 of gold, and as exchange-value we have the pounds of gold, there the price of 1A is £2 of gold. What happens if the productivity of the labor that produces commodity A increases and the productivity of the labor that produces money stands still?



Now [**2**] a unit of commodity A contains half as much labour as before. Therefore, the value ratio between a 1A and 1£ gold is now a 1A = 1£1 gold. The exchange-value fell by half, as befits the halving of the value of each unit of A.

[262] I name the slides in square brackets to mention them later.

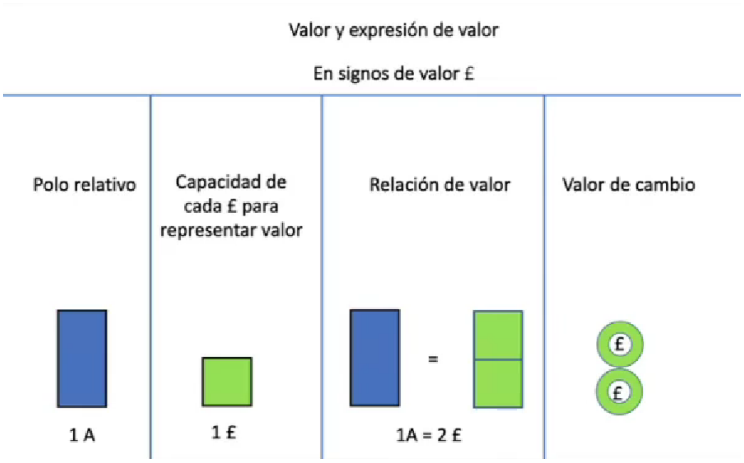


What we also had is what happens when the productivity of the labor that produces the equivalent changes, and consequently, the value of one unit of the equivalent changes. And so here [**3**] we have that the productivity of the labor that produces A doubled, but also that of the labor that produces gold. And consequently, the ratio between the value of 1A and the value of gold remains that 1A = £2 of gold, the same as we had before [**1**], because the value of the two elements was halved. And in the exchange value it will be stated that it takes £2 of gold to express the value of 1A. Do you remember all this?

Alejandro: Yes, that's what we saw when we were in the first episodes.

Ivan: But there wasn't this Power[Point].

JIC: No, I don't think we use it. I don't remember if we use a similar one or not. I generally use this for courses that are not from the workshop.



Well, here [**4**] we have the same thing, but now what circulates is not gold, but signs of value that are called "1£" and that are turned green. So we go back to the initial situation: this is the value of 1A because it carries that amount of socially necessary abstract labor that equals that. The sign of value for the quantity in circulation is expressed, represents the same as it represented £1 of gold before. And then, in this relationship (which is not valid to put it that way because signs

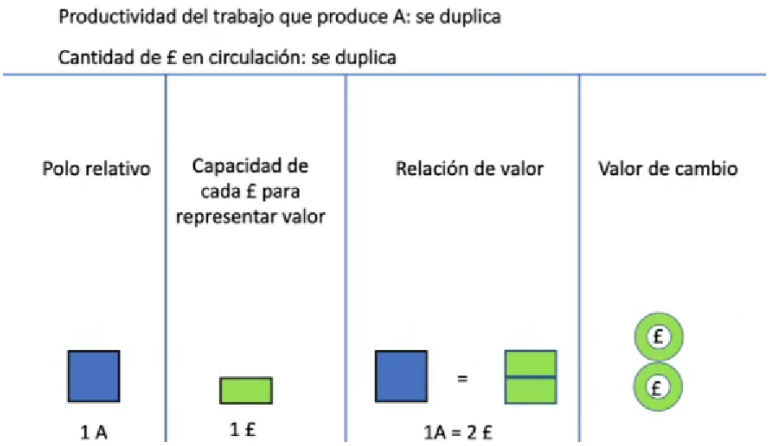
have no value, but hey), a 1A is worth 2 £ notes, and the exchange value, the price of this commodity, is going to be two £ notes or coins. The productivity of the labor produced by gold doubled, the number of signs of value in circulation did not change, consequently each sign of value continues to have the same capacity to represent value as before. And now, as the value of a unit of A fell by half, it only takes a £ value sign to express that value.

Alejandro: Juan, this step of the value relationship in the case of money is more than anything... as an intermediate to take into account that it is actually the price, right? Because what you mentioned that there can be no relationship of value because sign money has value...

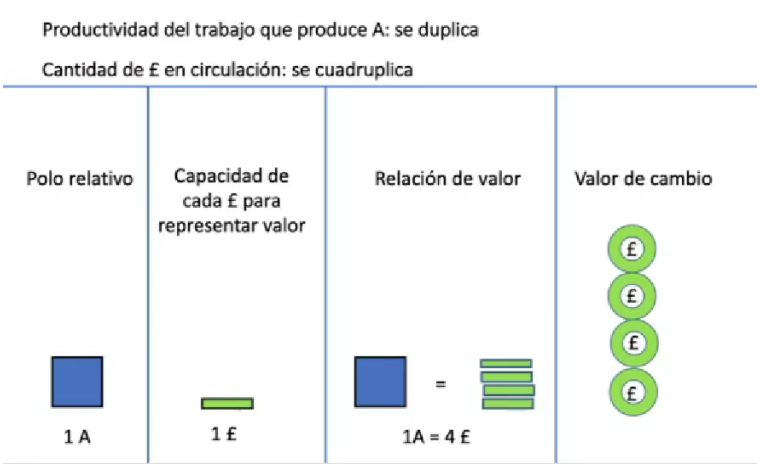
JIC: The value sign has no value.

Alejandro: So what you actually see right away is the price.

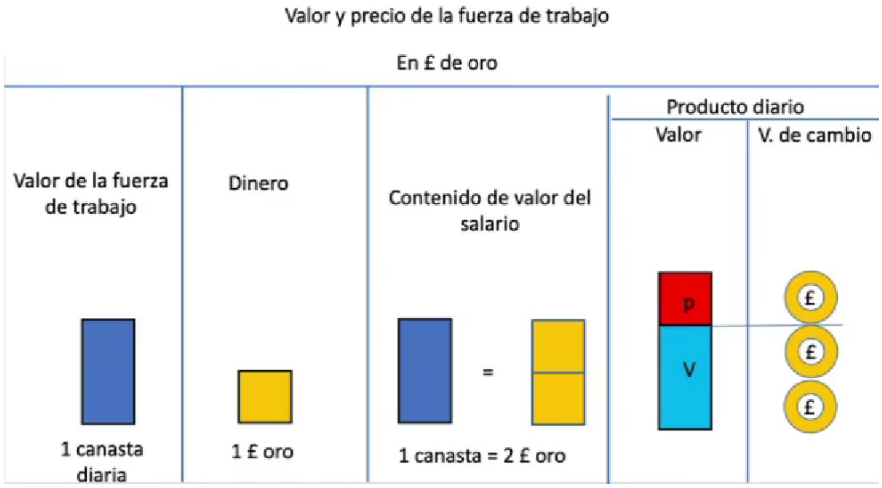
JIC: What is going to appear is the price, but I have it that way for the purposes of the exhibition, so that it is clear (Now let's look at why). So far it seems that this part was redundant, that I could put it here "exchange value" and that's it. But there's a reason to separate it that comes later.



Well, the same thing now [**5**]: the productivity of the labor that A produces has doubled, but so has the number of value signs. And consequently, even though the value of commodity A fell by half, its exchange-value expressed in signs of value is still £2 of paper, say. So much for the exchange of any two commodities. There is still one more thing missing and that is why there is now this [**6**]:

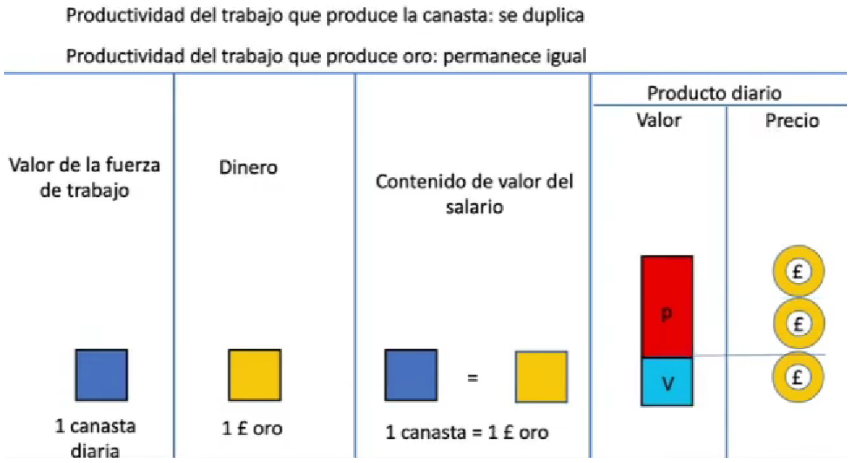


The productivity of the labor produced by 1A doubled and its value fell by half. But the number of signs of value in circulation quadrupled. Consequently, the ability of each value sign to represent value was reduced to half of what it was, and it now takes £4 of paper to express this reduced value of 1A. And so, the value of A decreased but the exchange value of A increased. In any of these cases... [Go to previous slides] In [**3**] the value of A decreased, but the exchange value of A did not change. Why? In the first case, because the value of gold also decreased. But in this case of the signs of value [**5**], it is because the number of signs of value in circulation increased. And in [**6**], it is that the number of value signs increased more than proportionately than the value of A decreased. So, in this case, it has less value, but in the value signs the price went up because each value sign has less capacity to represent value than it had before. And now I do think that we are going to look at the situation with the value of the workforce.

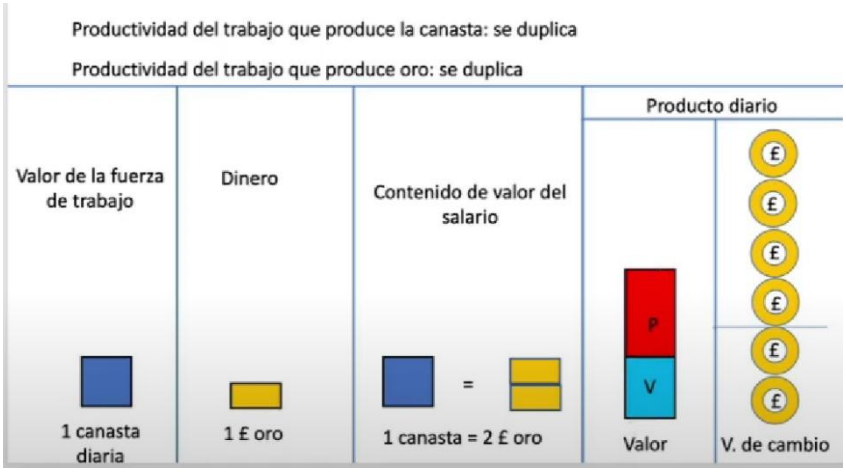


So, now [**7**] we are going to consider that what was previously a 1A, is the daily basket that determines the value of labor power. This was the initial situation: the quantity of labour that 1£ gold produces is half the quantity of labour that the basket produces, and then the value of a basket is expressed in 2£ of gold. And now we add the daily product, and we are going to consider that this is the amount of value that a worker produces per day's work; Since the value of their labor power is this basket, this is **surplus value** and this is the **value** of labor power. In the expression in quantities of £ of gold, what we are going to have is that the product

of the total value of labour is £3 of gold, the value of labour power is £2 of gold, and the price of labour is £2 of gold. What the worker receives in the form of wages is £2 of gold.



What we have here [8] is the situation that followed: the productivity of the labor that produces the basket doubled, nothing happened with the productivity of the labor that produces the gold, and now 1 basket = 1 £ of gold. The value of labour-power was halved, and consequently the worker's wages are now only £1 gold (hitherto he received £2), the other being released as surplus-value. The capitalist receives £2, the worker £1. And this means that the worker had to be called and told that now he is going to receive a single gold coin. In ordinary terms, that is, the value of labour-power falls, the nominal wage falls, the real wage—the purchasing power of the worker—remains constant because the commodities he is going to buy are worth half of what they were worth.

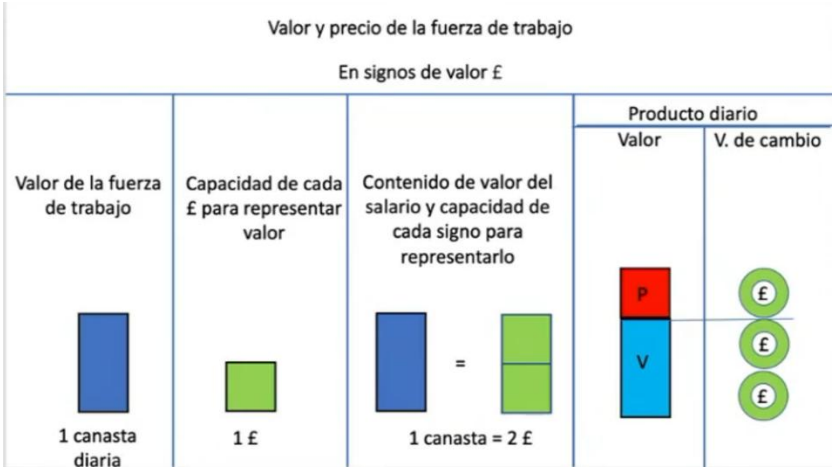


In this other case [9] the productivity of the labor produced by gold is also doubled. What we're going to get is that a basket is still worth £2 of gold, its price is still two ounces of gold, the value was halved. But as the value of each £ of gold was also halved, we're going to have the following. We are going to consider, in the working day, how there is a general doubling of the productivity of work... What I have to represent now is the value product of a day's work. That product of value

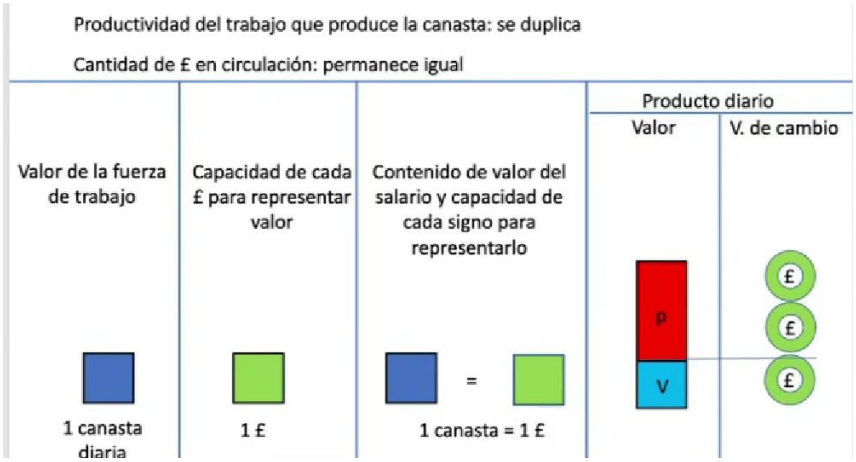
which was formerly expressed in £3 of gold, as now each £ of gold contains half the labour which it formerly contained, I need £6 of gold to express the value of the product of the labourer's labour. That product of value is the same as before, but since the productivity of the labor that produced gold has doubled, I now need twice as much gold to express that same value. Of this double amount of gold, the worker now, instead of receiving $^{2}/_{3}$, as before, will receive $^{1}/_{3}$, because the value of labor power has been reduced by half. But the rate of surplus value will have risen. The value of what the worker produced does not change, but the expression of the value of what the worker produced doubled, and the value of labor power was halved. The nominal wage remained the same and the real wage remained the same, the worker still receives two gold coins, he buys the same quantity of commodities as before, but the value of his labor power was reduced by half.

And now we are going to consider, not when gold circulates, but when the signs of value circulate. Do they want to say something?

Alejandro: Juan, these were the points that I had left pending in classical economics that I had never managed to marry well, but I think that now I am managing to understand it a little better and well, I wait for it to be finished and in any case we will talk about it.

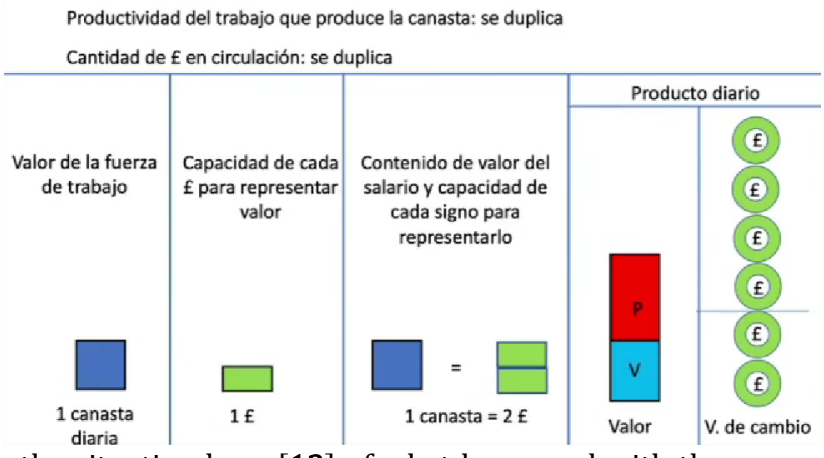


JIC: Okay. Now let's go to the fact that there are signs of value [**10**]. We start again in the initial situation: this is the value of the basket, there is a number of value signs in circulation by which each sign represents an ounce of gold, and consequently the content of the value of wages and of the capacity of each sign to represent it, that is, the value content, and it takes £2 of a value sign to represent that value. Let us go to the working day: it has this duration, $^{2}/_{3}$ is needed for the worker to reproduce the value of his labour-power, $^{1}/_{3}$ remains of surplus value, and the worker's wages are £2 on paper.



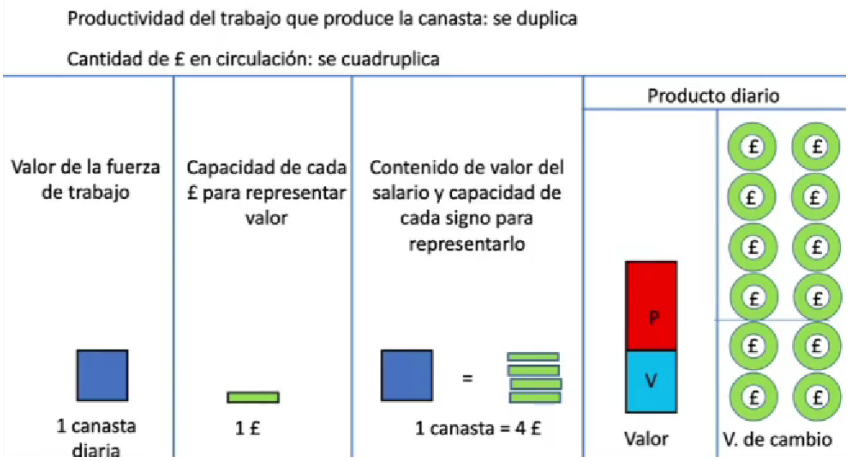
[**11**] The productivity of the labor produced by the basket doubled, and the number of value signs in circulation did not change. Consequently, now the value content was halved, the value sign's ability to represent value remained the same. And now the worker needs only $^{1}/_{3}$ of the day to reproduce the value of his labor power. It continues to work the same, it continues to produce the same mass of value, but now, from that mass of value of £3, £1 corresponds to it, £2 went on to form surplus value. And we have to have that the value of labor power fell, the nominal wage fell, the real wage did not fall. But here the conflict arises that the worker must be called and his nominal wage lowered.

The signs of value are put into circulation by the state. How can the state, from the point of view of the general movement of the process of capital accumulation, as the representative of the total capital of society, make the value of labor power fall, consequently surplus value rises, but the nominal wage does not fall? If the state incorporates into circulation a number of value signs that correspond to how much the productivity of the labor produced by the basket increased... That is: the productivity of labour doubled, the value of labour power was halved, but the capacity of each £1 note to represent value was also halved, because the number of notes in circulation was doubled. Now the value content has been halved, but the ability of each value sign to represent value has also been halved. And consequently, to express the value of a basket you still need £2 of paper.

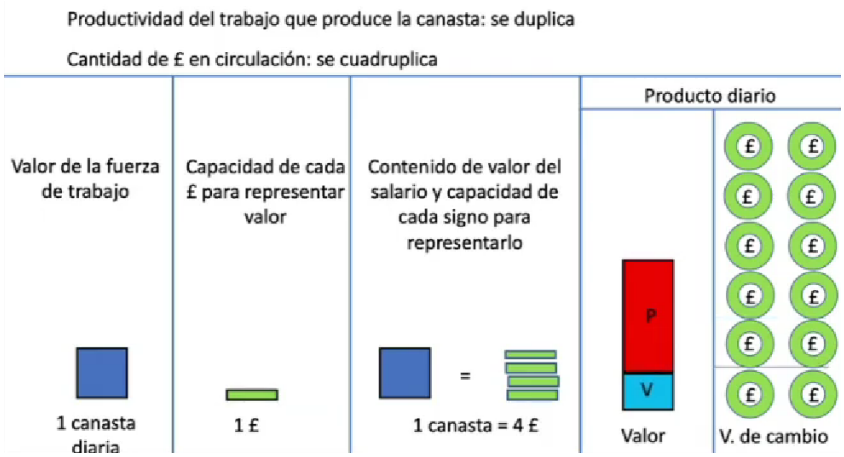


Let's go to the situation here [**12**] of what happened with the appropriation of the product of labor. And we have that the product of labor in the mass of value

remains the same, but now the mass of value, as each sign of value lost half of its capacity to represent value, is no longer expressed in the 3 units that we had before, but is now expressed in 6£, because each of these units represents half of the value that it represented before. Of this £6, the capitalist appropriates £4 and pays the worker the value of his labour-power, which is £2. And what we have here with the mediation of the state, increasing the number of signs of value that are in circulation so that each of them loses a proportional part of its capacity to represent value in the face of what happened to the productivity of labor that produces the means of subsistence for the workers, it is that surplus value increased, the value of labor power decreased, the nominal wage did not change and the real wage did not change. And then, the capitalists did not have to call their workers and tell them that they were going to cut their nominal wages in half and have the conflict. The nominal wage remained the same, but its purchasing power in terms of value was halved, but in terms of the price of commodities it remained constant.

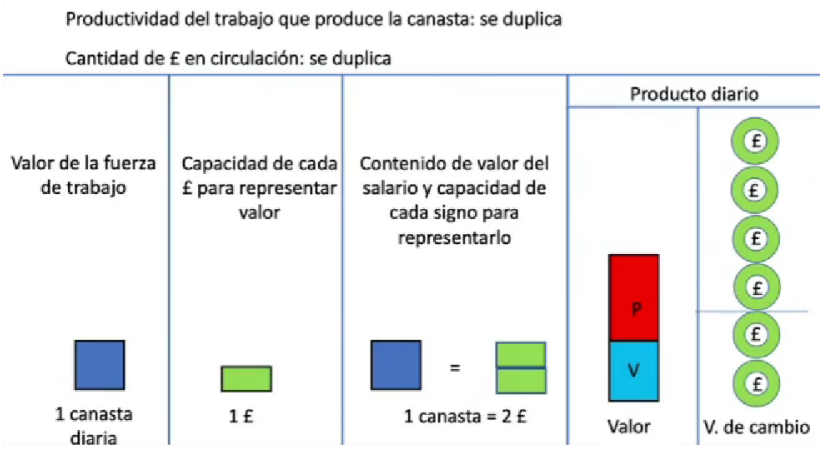

Productividad del trabajo que produce la canasta: se duplica
Cantidad de £ en circulación: se cuadruplica
Valor de la fuerza de trabajo
Capacidad de cada £ para representar valor
Contenido de valor del salario y capacidad de cada signo para representarlo
Producto diario
P
V
=
1 canasta diaria
1 £
1 canasta = 4 £
Valor
V. de cambio

And there is a further step in this which corresponds to the example in which the value of gold also decreased. Here [**13**] the number of value signs in circulation is quadrupled. Each value sign has its ability to represent value reduced by a quarter: it now takes £4 of paper to represent the value of the basket. The value product that remains the same, is now expressed at £12. Of these 12 notes, the capitalist keeps £8 and pays the worker £4: the worker sees his nominal wage increased. What do you have here? The value of labor power decreased, but the nominal wage increased and the real wage remained constant. The worker continues to have the same purchasing power as before, but he had an increase in his nominal wage. Not only did he not have to lower his nominal salary, but he was even granted an increase in the nominal salary.


Productividad del trabajo que produce la canasta: se duplica
Cantidad de £ en circulación: se cuadruplica
Producto diario
Valor de la fuerza de trabajo
Capacidad de cada £ para representar valor
Contenido de valor del salario y capacidad de cada signo para representarlo
P
V
1 canasta diaria
1 £
1 canasta = 4 £
Valor
V. de cambio

And the last example we have [**14**] is painfully Argentine. The value of the basket was halved, but the capacity of each value sign to represent value was reduced by a quarter because the number of value signs in circulation was quadrupled. A basket is now worth £4 of paper; The worker receives no increase in his nominal wage, and consequently he will be selling labor power below value. He will have given up a part of the value of the labour power converted into surplus value, his nominal wage will have remained constant in the face of the increase in the price of his basket, which went from 2£ to 4£. He continues to receive £2 and the capitalist has increased his surplus value.

So, what appears as the general movement tends to be this that is here [I repeat **12**]:


Productividad del trabajo que produce la canasta: se duplica
Cantidad de £ en circulación: se duplica
Producto diario
Valor de la fuerza de trabajo
Capacidad de cada £ para representar valor
Contenido de valor del salario y capacidad de cada signo para representarlo
P
V
1 canasta diaria
1 £
1 canasta = 2 £
Valor
V. de cambio

[...] This is the simplest determination. The same goes for bank money. But in the simplest case, [nation states] incorporate signs of value that compensate for the increase in labor productivity; Consequently, the value of labour-power fell, the nominal wage stood still, the real wage stood still, and the worker had nothing to complain about. And it is on this mechanism that the value of labor power goes down without the price of labor falling.

When capital is going to pay for labor power more below its value, this is the way to do it [**14**, the "Argentine" case: the prices of the means of living rise and the

nominal wage does not rise in the same proportion, or does not rise at all. Not only has the value of labor power decreased, but it is being sold below value. Is all this clear?

Iván: Juan, a question: how is this resolved when there are asymmetrical increases in labor productivity? That is, when in a national space there are industries that increase their labor productivity. No, for... I'm getting confused with the question, I'm not going to ask it, I'm going to think about it.

JIC: No, but let's see, this is put in general terms. Then, the concrete forms that this takes, in turn, depends on the national processes of capital accumulation: it depends on what happens to that labor power, if it is being sold for its value, if it is selling under, if the value of that labor power is changing... Because beyond what happens with the productivity of labor, the amount of use values that the worker has to consume increases; or the length of the working day decreases because the intensity of work increased; or the other way around: the length of the working day is extended; or the value of labour-power decreases because a greater part of the working-class family becomes the seller of labour-power... That is where all these concrete determinations mediate.

What I propose with this scheme is the general determination. In addition, nation states not only do that, but they also do a little more. So, if the value of labor power has decreased, even though they are going to maintain the purchasing power, there is some increase, or some nominal increase, because as more signs of value were issued, the prices of commodities rose. And then, it seems that there would be an increase in the nominal wage, and the real wage more or less remains the same. Nation states do this not simply for... The workers are happy because they get a nominal increase, but that is not the axis. It is because because nation states are indebted, to diminish the capacity of signs of value to represent value—and their debts are nominated in those signs of value—is to make the interest rate on public debt lower. In general, it is the interest rate on all debts, but as an immediate policy of the state, it decreases the interest rate. It seems that the interest rate is higher, and in reality it is the real interest rate that is lower, and it can even become negative. So, all these mechanisms play out there in the middle.

This is... I would put it like this: it is the general determination of inflation. Why does it become a continuous phenomenon of greater or lesser degree? Then one has to explain the national specificities, in particular very markedly since the crisis of the thirties... There are other times when this happens before markedly, and one can look at the unity of it all. *In the simplest determination*, this is the function that inflation fulfills: it allows the value of labor power to decrease without having to lower the nominal wage, and then without the immediate conflict appearing. The conflict is about the salary increase, not the salary reduction: it is not that I come to complain because they are lowering my salary, I come to ask for a salary increase. From an ideological point of view, what appears is: "Do you see that you are going to be better?" Afterwards, the purchasing power is the same or may become less, but the image from the point of view of the reproduction of consciousness, it seems that we have to fight for a conquest, not for a "defense" of a situation, to put it in these terms. Pedro, you wanted to raise something.

Pedro: Yes, Juan. I wanted to say that the incorporation of money by the state still appears to us as an externality, right? Because it is still not explained what is the need of the state that leads to printing money to lower wages and all that.

JIC: Here it appears linked to the fluid movement of capital accumulation. It is the way to avoid a disturbance in the flow of capital movement because the workers are faced with an open fall in their wages. Let's take it this way: the productivity of labor increases, and if this increase does not imply a greater intensity of labor, it does not imply that the worker, in order to have the productive attributes, has to consume more use-values than before; then, the nominal wage would have to fall, and this is the way for the movement to flow by lowering the value of labor power. If this mechanism did not operate, the worker would see that as the productivity of his labor increases, his wages go down. And so you might think that you are not being paid for productivity, as the neoclassical theory says. He would face the fact that it is obvious that he is not paid for productivity because the more productive he is, the lower the value of his labor power in these conditions that I set, the lower his salary would be.

The ideological form of this is reflected in the official statistics. You can see what happens to the real wage, and it appears that the real wage rises because the worker consumes more use-values. And then *it appears* that the worker is being benefited by the movement of capital; and in reality, these additional use-values which the worker consumes involve a decrease in the value of labour-power, because, in very crude terms, its value has been reduced by half, and the quantity of use-values which he can consume is increased by 10 per cent. What you see is that you earn more than before, and you can't see that the value of your labor power was 100, it was reduced to 50 + a 10% that you are given, and now the value of your labor power is 55. It decreased from 100 to 55, but it seems to the worker that in reality his real wage increased.

This is a movement that has a general character, it is not a movement that corresponds to a development that goes beyond what we have in front of us. This already appears here, and this is one of the reasons. The state has other reasons, that's why I say; Another reason that the State has as a representative of total capital is to lower the interest rate, making it not as positive as nominally that, making it negative. And then other reasons of a circumstantial or more specific nature appear. One of the crude ways of lowering the real wage without lowering the nominal wage, even increases the number of signs of value that are put into circulation, causes prices to rise more than what that nominal wage is increasing, the real wage is falling. So, the systematic emission of signs of value above which corresponds the representation of the mass of value that there is, because the mass of value, if one takes the total quantity of labor still, is always the same. The incorporation of value signs plays this role. Moreover, it plays another role which is connected with this, but which makes the general movement of capital.

I am taking increases in labor productivity that are disproportionate to any concrete movement, but so that it is more or less visible. Suppose that from one year to the next the labor productivity of the entire economy doubles (we are

looking at a national economy in itself). If the productivity of the labour which produces all commodities is doubled , the mass of commodities which comes into circulation is doubled. The value of each unit fell by half, and then, if one looks at it simply like this, if there remain in circulation the same number of signs of value as there were before the productivity of labor doubled, each sign of value still represents the same magnitude of value as before. And as the value of all commodities, because the productivity of labor of all was doubled, fell by half, the price of each of those commodities in signs of value also fell by half.

How do you move from the old social value to this new social value? The amount of commodities in circulation has doubled and there are the same number of bills as before. What appears is: there is a lack of solvent demand. As there is a lack of solvent demand to sell twice as much, prices have to fall by half. This is a mechanism that has the form of an acute crisis, where prices are reduced by half, which is what corresponds to the fact that their value was reduced by half, but which is manifested because there is not enough purchasing power. It seems that there is a money crisis: there is a lack of money, a lack of solvent demand. So, if the state manages to double the number of signs of value (later it depends on who it assigns them to) that are in circulation, now there is twice as much solvent social need as there was before nominally. There are twice as many commodities, there is twice as much solvent social need. Double the commodities are sold at the same price as before. Its value fell by half, but its price in signs of value remains the same as before. There is no lack of money. The economy flowed, it did not go into crisis because it was necessary to sell twice as much and there was no money to buy that double, and then competition had to take the form of all prices falling by half, and the movement of capital continued to flow "without conflict", to put it that way. So, this is a general need of the total capital of society. I don't know, Pedro, if...

Pedro: Perfect Juan, yes, perfect, I understood. It is a necessity of the very movement of capital to put money into circulation, yes.

JIC: Exactly. And so, it is a continuous movement that makes the accumulation more fluid. Because yes, there are changes in prices in those movements, there are prices that can go down, there are prices that go up more than the others, but all of that depends on all the concrete determinations that are at stake, how the state adds those signs of value in circulation, because it also depends on where circulation enters. That is why this also works a lot through the movement of bank money, changes in the speed of circulation of money... There are a whole series of mechanisms, but in principle this appears to be a movement of a general nature.

Pedro: Maybe I'm getting ahead of myself, but now that I saw it that way, the issue of the gold standard came to mind, which reached the point that this increase in productivity, putting money into circulation... until it reached a point where the gold standard could no longer be met. Sure, maybe I got ahead or it has nothing to do with it, but I thought about it, it came to mind now.

JIC: It's just that, right where it starts systematically... One sees it by the demonstration: the value of commodities has been falling radically. I am going to take as a point of reference in the crisis of the thirties: the value of commodities

has fallen ferociously since the crisis of the thirties onwards, and yet the prices of commodities, far from having fallen, have risen. That is to say that there are, in the simplest determination, more signs of value in proportion than what increased productivity, the proportion of signs of value increased more than the proportion in which the productivity of labor increased. So, this appears as determination, in general.

I am going to attribute to myself the discovery of that determination, of this reason for determination, but it is not recognized as such. Especially since neoclassical economics does not look at the value of commodities: for it there is no value other than price. So, you have no way of realizing that the value is decreasing, even if the price is constant or increasing. The question is: well, it's time for the gold standard to disappear, the crisis of the 1930s. But there are many complexities there, because we would have to see what happened to the productivity of the labor produced by gold, which, as we are going to see when we reach the end of Volume 3, is not the average productivity, but is the productivity on the worst soil. So you also have to look at that.

We have to look at whether at this point in the development of the capitalist mode of production there can be a convertibility towards gold, because there is no gold available for the number of signs of value that there are, to be able to substitute... they are not even the signs of value. If you remember, in Chapter III the function of money as a means of payment appeared, and there Marx speaks of money that derives from the function as a means of payment, which is the whole development of bank money and reciprocal compensations, where in reality an amount of money is needed that corresponds to the net of reciprocal compensations. because the rest is all closed through accounting entries, let's say. All of this is going to appear in Volume 3.

In any case, Marx there in Volume 3 maintains that gold as a store of value *always* has to fulfill that role. And one of the functions of gold as a treasure is to make the banknotes convertible. With respect to what you were saying, you associated it with the problem of convertibility; And indeed, this generalized form appears linked at the point at which convertibility by gold ceases to work and what remains is the convertibility of some national currencies by other national currencies, where the dollar begins to appear as the currency that circulates in the world market. I think it does have some relationship with the possibility or not of sustaining convertibility against gold. Alejandro, did you want to raise something?

Alejandro: Very short: regarding, first, the last thing that arose, there would also be the question of gold, which would not have the same fluidity in that price movement as in the case of the issuance of signs of value, right?

JIC: No, because it would depend on the productivity of labor in the worst land needed to produce gold. With this particularity (which is why this has a whole series of problems later to represent it).

In the generality of commodities, what determines value is the socially necessary abstract labour-time, the simplest determination of which is an average.

I don't know if this works out well for me, but that's the first determination: it's what it costs to reproduce the commodity. But the commodity enters circulation, and leaves circulation, and goes into the sphere of consumption. Gold functioning as money does not leave circulation, as money that circulates, it remains in circulation. That's what we saw. So, this is what Marx said: a certain amount of gold fits. And the problem that appears there is that there the gold has a life until material wear and tear consumes it. And so, there's a stock of gold that's moving in circulation, which isn't the gold that's just been produced. And then, it depends on what happens with the supply capacity of this gold *today* with respect to that mass of gold that exists, that also mediates the movement of the value of that gold. Because let's suppose that now you can extract gold with twice the productivity of labor, but in reality you will only be able to extract 1% of the gold that is needed in circulation. The fact that producing that gold with that productivity of labor requires very little labor is not going to be reflected in the fact that the value of gold in general decreases.

So that's another complication that is there in the middle, which I didn't explain well, but well, I hope something has been understood... With this we end the salary section. Unless there is something they want, on this, to come back next time, we start with the reproduction. We start with that simple, short piece that is there, where they talk about reproduction, which is not a number of chapters or anything, it is a text of the section, and surely we start with simple reproduction.

[II]

JIC: Is there anything you want to raise about what we saw last time, the question of wages?

Alejandro: Well, basically it is a question that also derives from the talk that Iván is so anxious to hear, and that is directly related to what is in a past class. I also talked about it with Javiera. It is the question of how it is that wages rise nominally but actually fall. Because this rise in wages is proportionally less than the rise in the prices of other commodities. Well, although this is a general determination, because it corresponds to the fall in the value of labor power, we see that, for example, in countries like Argentina, this has an additional determination, which is the question that the fall in real wages goes beyond the value of labor power. But there's this question of how, in terms of political action, you fight against that.

It seems to me that the last class was planned. This question of the struggle for wages. [...] My question is: the struggle for wages, understanding that the political action of the working class is a necessary moment (because one cannot stop fighting for one's own living conditions, if one cannot reproduce one's life afterwards, tomorrow one will not be able to ask oneself about one's own determinations), what limit does it have? Because sometimes you get to positions that end up putting the struggle for wages as the maximum. For wages and for employment, for the amount of employment, they end up putting that struggle as a maxim. And my question is what's beyond that.

JIC: I don't know what the "beyond" is.

Alejandro: I am referring to what other form of political action that overcomes the limits that the struggle for wages may have.

JIC: I'm going to dodge the question. I think it is useful to bring up something that I suppose I should have mentioned before, which is the proposal that Marx makes in the conference that is published as *Wages, Price and Profit*, which is the response to a proposal made within the organization of the working class. If I remember correctly from someone with the surname Weston, I do not know the proposal made by the individual, but I infer from the answer given by Marx that he stated that every time the workers achieve an increase in wages, the capitalists increase prices and sterilize that increase in wages. Therefore, the conclusion that this individual drew is: fighting for an increase in wages, in defense of wages, is useless; The only thing that can be done is the immediate struggle to overcome the capitalist mode of production, annihilating it is the only thing that makes sense, the union struggle has no meaning. It must be borne in mind that this is raised in England in the mid-nineteenth century, where the struggle in a large part of the English working class is around unionization. So, everything had a significant significance. Then, Marx gave him a very detailed and long answer (I don't know if it is a single batch that makes the whole proposal or if it is more than one meeting) proposing the following.

In the first place, what it develops is that no one can raise prices on a whim, that prices have a determination. It makes all the development of the value of commodities; it does not yet have the differentiation (I spoke of it last time, I think) between the value of labor power and the value of labor. Still there he talks about the value of work saying... I don't know if it's there or elsewhere, he says: if the capitalists could raise the price at will, then why would they be content to raise it by 10% if they can raise it by 20% or 30%? To propose this increase is to ignore the laws of determining the value of commodities. That is why he makes the whole foundation by unfolding the determinations of value. So, he says: that statement that when the workers achieve a wage increase they lose it because the capitalists increase prices stops at an appearance.

What can workers achieve by fighting for their wages in the capitalist mode of production? And it makes all the display that the only thing they can achieve is to sell their labor power for its value. But the very selling power of labor power for its value, takes shape through the action of the workers in defense of their wages, and consequently, far from what was the proposal that the union struggle has no meaning because all conquests were lost, what Marx proposes is: the workers will only succeed in selling their labor power for value. But in order to be able to sell labor power for value, they cannot stop fighting. If they don't fight, they're not even going to be able to sell that labor power for its value. So, first of all, we have these determinations.

But I make a clarification with something that Alejandro had said. What we saw were three movements in which the value of labor power, unless there are changes in the productive attributes of the workers – and in what capital needs its workers

to consume in order to have labor power; unless there is a change linked to the increase in the intensity of work; that there are changes with the length of the working day... All the things that we had seen in the last or penultimate chapter of the previous section, that of the salary. What is necessarily going to happen is that, just as the productivity of labor in general increases... We saw that it is a necessity for each individual capitalist to increase the productivity of the labor of his own workers, so that he can face the other capitalists in competition. It is a matter of life and death to advance in this increase in the productivity of labor, no matter what is produced, whether directly or indirectly means of subsistence for workers or other commodities. But the value of the universe of commodities has a sustained tendency to fall in unit value. Therefore, the wage as the price of labor power, under the appearance that it is the price of labor, insofar as it contains substance of value, will necessarily have to present a tendency, a decreasing movement, unless there are these other determinations that I mentioned and that I believe we saw at a certain stage of development.

This fall in the value of labor power is partly counteracted over an entire historical period by the shortening of the working day associated with the increase in labor intensity, the increase in the amount of use values that the working family needs to consume in order to produce a labor power with the productive attributes that capital demands from it. But what one has as a general determination is that the value of labor power necessarily tends to decrease. Now: this would imply that the price, the wage, would also have to decrease. And that was where we looked at this movement in which if we consider that the material needs to reproduce labor power are always the same, what we are going to have is that from that basket of use values, the value will decrease, but the basket will not decrease. And consequently, if the value decreased, what we would have immediately, is that the price of the basket will decrease, but the basket will be the same. So, the real wage is going to be preserved. But the nominal wage must fall, and the fall in the nominal wage, especially the more the increase in the productivity of labor accelerates, the more conflictive the need to nominally lower the wage, accompanying the decrease in the value of labor power, becomes for the relationship between capitalists and workers.

And what Marx proposed refers to the piece-rate wage, where it is seen that productivity increases and wages decrease, and that this is a situation of conflict between the worker and the capitalist. The development of the capitalist mode of production has taken a form in which this movement exists, but it is diluted in manifestation. And the way to dilute it, if gold were to circulate as money, would be for the productivity of labor that produces gold to grow at the same rate as the productivity of labor that produces the means of subsistence for the workers directly or indirectly—which would imply the generality of the productivity of labor. That would be the condition if gold circulated: that the two productivitys grow in parallel so that the unit value of the basket and of each unit of gold would fall, and the exchange ratio would not change. The exchange value of the basket, of less and less value, expressed in gold of less and less value, would remain the same: 1 basket = 1 ounce of gold, although the value that is enclosed in that basket and the value that is enclosed in the ounce of gold is becoming smaller and smaller. But

gold does not circulate. And nothing says that the productivity of labor that gold produces can grow at the same rate as the productivity of labor in general.

And so, what we have is the substitution of gold for signs of value. The way in which the decrease in the value of labor power is not manifested is that the signs of value lose their unit capacity to represent value in the same proportion as the value of the basket that determines the value of labor power decreases. Now, how do you go about diminishing the ability of value signs to represent value? By pouring more signs of value into circulation, accompanying the increase in the productivity of labor with the multiplication of signs of value.

I also made the clarification: when one considers the forms of bank money, it is not simply the quantity of the sign of value, it is the sign of value + bank money, which is through the expansion of credit, something that does not appear so far. And that then, in the general movement, it could, from the point of view of the unity of the movement of capital, conceal the fall in the value of labour-power because the workers continue to buy the same thing: nominal prices are the same, although the value of labour-power is falling. But for that, the one that has the power to add, to issue signs of value, to accelerate the movement of bank money or to multiply the expansion of bank credit, is the state. Then what becomes more complex is where he puts them, because how does he do it? If you add signs of value, you simply have to give them to someone. And here also plays a central role the expansion of bank money, which can be distributed within society more or less massively.

In turn, and independently of the whole movement of the value of labor power, the state, as the representative of the total capital of society, can also push labor power to be sold below its value by incorporating more signs of value into circulation than there were up to that time. given the mass of value that is circulating at a moment. And so, what it can achieve in this process of capital valorization, whose political representative is the state, is that labor power is sold below value without lowering the nominal wage. It can even raise the nominal wage and make it fall... not only [...] to ensure that labour power is sold below value, which if it was sold at its value until then means that the workers can no longer buy the basket of commodities that they used to buy. So, the struggle for wages is the struggle around these determinations of the sale of labor power for its value.

As for what simply transcends this struggle, it is the expression of the contradiction between the universal worker and the universal capitalist in the unity of the class struggle. What is the working class doing in this movement? What one has to look at before all this. In the first place, the working class, the universal worker, is a universal unit, but it has forms, it is cut out or takes shape under national forms, national cuts. So far, the states are national. And the private character of work is manifested in national fragmentation, in the fragmentation of branches... A whole series of fragmentations. And what one must never forget is that the simplest relation in the capitalist mode of production is not the relation of solidarity, but the relation of competition. And as a manifestation of this relationship of competition, what is going to happen is that the workers who are being cut off by the different fragmentations of capital, are tied in their immediate

reproduction to the reproduction of that capital to which they sell their labor power. And so, when one wonders about the forms of political action of the working class, one cannot help but wonder why it happens with the process, with the movement... Now we are going to enter into accumulation, I am going to use the expression already: with the accumulation of that capital to which the immediate reproduction of the life of these workers is linked.

And then these determinations appear. I want to leave part of it for when we finish because we are going to reach a point where I would like to make a proposal about the condition of the working class as a revolutionary subject. So, the answer to this question of what else is done... But I am going to put something that we already looked at. We have in front of us in this that we have been seeing several contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production, and in what we know of the capitalist mode of production. I take this opportunity to raise it because that was what the following section was going to begin with.

We have a contradiction that refers to the process that we have been advancing with our knowledge, which is why if we started looking at capital in the process of circulation, M-C-M', and there it was a simple value that was valued, why was it presented to us like this? If when we look at it, when we enter the process of production we clearly see that it is not a simple value that is valorized, a part of that value that is the variable capital put into the purchase of labor power is capable of being valorized, and the other part of that value put into the purchase of means of production is inert. But not only is it inert, but later, what we saw in the development of this contradiction was that constant capital had to grow faster as soon as it was put into raw materials than variable capital as a result of the increase in the productivity of labor. And then we saw with machinery that constant capital had to grow by eating up variable capital as the source of the increase in the productivity of labor. So we have this situation that we were seeing up to that point.

Now, later in this section we are going to look at the development of that contradiction one more step. And we already have a contradiction which is: when we began to look at the movement of capital, the first thing we saw was the movement of an individual capital (M-C-M'). When we continue to look at it in production, it was still this individual capital. But when we look at the section on the length of the working day, we look at it with the need for surplus labour-power from capital... Up to that point we saw the movement of individual capital and we saw it as the subject of its own valorization: social production is set in motion with the immediate purpose of multiplying the capacity to set in motion that production as something that cannot be controlled, and the concrete form that this has is the multiplication of capital. But when we looked at the length of the day, what we saw is that the subject is not an individual capital. Rather, the subject of this movement is the *total* capital of society, which is the bearer of the unity of the process of social metabolism. When we look at this determination, we are faced with the contradiction that the subject is the total capital of society, but at the same time it is *subject* to the movement of individual capitals, which we did not see to have a necessary unity when they are governing, they do not have something that allows

them to govern their process of valorization by recognizing themselves as organs of the total capital of society. And then we have this other contradiction.

These two contradictions make the scope of the deployment that we have been doing. But there is another contradiction which has, so to speak, a different character. And that contradiction is what we have been seeing in the socialization of private labor. That is still in development, but that has been appearing more and more deployed. And that this growing socialization of private labor contains a conscious, scientific—that is, on an objective basis—organization of the process of social production that is ever more intense. And we went beyond Marx's development and asked ourselves who is the human subject who carries the capacity for this development based on scientific consciousness, which in essence is a growing socialization of private labor. And if what characterizes the capitalist mode of production is private labor, a growing socialization of private labor is an abolition of private labor within the capitalist mode of production itself. It is a development of the overcoming of the character of social labor done privately within social labor done privately. And that if this socialization, for something that is not present or we have not deployed so far, carries with it the need to transcend the private character of work – which means the impossibility of establishing an immediate unity between social production and consumption – the subject of the full development of that socialization, if it also had the power to overcome the capitalist mode of production, it is the human subject who is in charge of the development of the socialization of private labor. And the subject that is in charge of the point of view of the materiality of the process, which is what we have seen so far, is the working class.

And then, the condition of the working class as a historical subject appears. But what we also saw is that this historical subject then advances in its freedom, because it develops an objective knowledge about itself as a form of the development of its alienation in capital. And what we saw is that what is characteristic of the capitalist mode of production is (in simple terms) barbarism, brutality in the process of development of human life. And that everything that happens in the capitalist mode of production, which advances towards the socialization of private labor, is always at the expense of the working class. And so, here we have the working class developing the productive forces of social labour, developing the contradiction of the socialisation of private labour, at the expense of itself.

Well, all that prolegomenon was to say that this is what is at stake with respect to what forms of political action of the working class that transcend the simple question; it is embedded within that, it is not separate, because we saw all the transformations, what they imply in the worker, what does the transformation of a part of the working population into surplus for the general social relation itself... All this is what one has to have in front of one when one is asking oneself about, beyond the struggle for wages, what is there? Well, this is what it is. […]

Iván: Just one very small thing, Juan, that I have a doubt. The whole process that you developed previously on monetary issuance, in the most general terms that

you are proposing, would be a process that develops without the phenomenon of price inflation.

JIC: It can be developed without price inflation. Precisely what there is is a decrease in value that is hidden in a price that remains nominally constant.

Ivan: Because the value of all commodities falls, including labor power, that would be the... In other words, inflation does not necessarily have to play a role in that process, does it?

JIC: No. If the price of the commodities that make up the basket and the price of labor power were to move in parallel, it would have no other effect than to hide the fact that the value of labor power is falling. But for the workers the diminution of the value of labour-power is indifferent, because they continue to buy the same mass of use-values which they bought before. Inflation in this development arises when more signs of value are added than what increased labor productivity. Because then yes, then there is a rise. The sign of value lost more ability to represent value than the value of commodities decreased and, consequently, the prices of commodities measured in signs of value will rise. And now, if this is sustained over time and a larger proportion of signs of value continues to be added with respect to what increases the productivity of labor, the prices of commodities measured in signs of value will continue to rise.

Ivan: Perfect. I had a doubt, because I think it is very typical of this country that one already hears "monetary issuance" and thinks of inflation. And I had kept that image going around, but at the same time I said: no, but here inflation does not necessarily have to play a role, the process goes in another direction. And so, I needed to ask you to confirm.

JIC: Yes. What the concrete movement says in the historical process, at least from the crisis of the 1930s onwards, is that everywhere the states have added more signs of value, more bank money than what corresponded to the general increase in the productivity of labor. This, from the point of view of capital, especially from the national state, can have several effects that serve capital. If this has a measure... Marx says with regard to these questions that all measures are lost, but one has already seen that a long time passes until all measures are lost and a phenomenon can occur sustainably and to a very high degree. But one of the things they do is to produce, from the point of view of the antagonistic relation between capital and the working class, that there is an increase in wages, but that increase in wages does not entail an increase in the mass of use-values. The only thing it does is compensate for the loss that the salary would have had if the increase that is given had not been given. So, the struggle to increase the value of labor power, one can say that it is diluted in a struggle that the only thing it can do is, in this case, more than increase the value of labor power, [...] in the sense that there are more use values, that all that can be done is to fight so that the use values that are being received are not lost. And in that the fighting capacity of the working class is consumed.

On the other hand, all these national states are debtors and (it is far from what we are seeing so far) they have to pay interest on the debts. And if they make the signs of value lose a little more of their corresponding value compared to what the increase in the productivity of labor implies, they eat up a part of the cost of interest. Which in some places is a part, in Argentina historically for many years the real interest rate continues to be negative. And that is a process of appropriation of social wealth by some subjects at the expense of other subjects. But hey, this is to look at later.
Not only does the state, as the representative of the total capital of society, save a part of the interest that it has to pay on this basis, but normally it is not the same social subjects who place capital that lend at interest and those who receive the loan.

In the general conditions, then, all the movements that correspond to the cyclical movements of accumulation, crises, and so on appear. But in the general movement, the capitals acting in production, trade, and so on, which are active, are borrowers. And consequently, the fact that this interest rate is not as high as it seems, or even that it is negative, implies a flow of wealth from the underwriters. And the underwriters of interest-bearing capital, when one takes the case of Argentina in particular, historically were the landowners. But today the main underwriter of interest-bearing capital in Argentina – the figures would have to be made exactly – is the working class through the retirement funds, which are systematically liquefied. And so, it's another way in which it looks like it's selling for value, closer to its value, whatever, and actually in the movement over time it becomes clear that it's selling below value, that it can't be reproduced under normal conditions. So that also plays a role in why there was always some nominal price increase, consequently, because more signs of value and more bank money were added than had increased the productivity of labor overall.

The other thing I wanted to clarify about this is that one has to differentiate the mechanism from the reasons why the mechanism is set in motion. And the ways in which the mechanism is set in motion. And you can't mix the two. The mechanism is this: there are more signs of value in circulation than correspond to the increase in the productivity of labor, and the result is going to be this. Now, why is it that in a national process of capital accumulation – I take the Argentine case – inflation is not a "misfortune", an accident? Inflation is the normality of this national process of capital accumulation. And that requires another kind of explanation. That is not the mechanism, it is the reason why the mechanism is continually set in motion. Without going into more things, it is a form of appropriation of social wealth. So one has to explain why in certain national spaces social wealth is appropriated in one way and why in others it is appropriated in a different way; what social wealth is involved, what is the history of this national process of capital accumulation, etc.

Javiera: Hello, Juan. I had a doubt about something you said very briefly about the relationship of solidarity. You said that the simplest relationship in the capitalist mode of production was that of competition and not that of solidarity. And there I was taken by something that Ivan said, that solidarity would then be a developed form of competition in the sense that it emerges from the need for labor

power to be sold for its value. Like that more developed idea, but because it emerges in the class struggle.

JIC: That is what we saw when we looked at the development of the concrete form of social relations, where solidarity is the necessary form that competition takes as an expression of a contradictory need for the total capital of society. That is why competition is the simplest relationship and solidarity is a concrete form of competition.

§7. THE PROCESS OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION

Chapter XXI. Simple reproduction

We start with circulation, looking at *Capital*. Chapter IV began in circulation. And then determinations appeared to us that, we could say, had been springing from circulation. We have said: in circulation commodities are bought for their value, they are sold for their value. How is it possible that there is more value? Well, there has to be a commodity whose use-value to the buyer is that it produces more value than it costs. Since value is the materialization of socially necessary abstract labor performed privately, then the capacity to work must appear in circulation as a commodity. So what were the conditions? The doubly free worker. It has to have courage: well, what's the determination? What is the condition? The value of the commodities that the working family ... etc.

In Chapter V we got into the production process, and the whole development of the absolute surplus value and relative surplus value section took place within the production process. And what we have seen is how what happens inside is changing, what the development of the production process shows us. But as we have already seen everything that happens within the production process, what seems to fit at this point is that we return to circulation. Because we said: valorization can only occur within the process of circulation and at the same time it cannot occur simply within the process of circulation. And in fact, when we entered the section on wages [§6], what happened to us was that we went back to the process of circulation. That is where the price of labor appeared: it is a phenomenon of circulation, not of production. So it would seem that we are already fully in circulation. However, two things are going to happen to us.

When we started by looking at commodities in Chapter I, they appeared to us in the process of production of commodities itself as simple products of labor. But from Chapter V onwards we already knew that they were not simple products of labor, that commodities in the capitalist mode of production are the product of capital. We know them in the process of production as a product of capital. But in circulation we never look upon them as products of capital. We look at the price of labour-power as the product of capital, but we do not look at the price of commodities. And then it may seem that what we have to do is to look at commodities as products of alienated labour in capital, no longer in production, but in circulation. But in reality, when we arrive at the movement of $M\text{-}C^{(FT+MMPP)}\text{-}M'$, the process of production, valorized commodity capital, multiplied money... What we find is that in the end we are at the same starting point that we had in the capital cycle.

So far, what we could see was how surplus value springs from capital. But before we can look at what happens to that capital in circulation, the question arises of what happens from the point of closure of one cycle to the point of opening of the next cycle. And what we're going to look at, then, is what Marx is going to refer to as the process of reproduction of capital. We are going to face

what appeared here as conditions set for the beginning of each cycle of capital valorization: the capitalist had his capital; the worker had his labor power. What we have to look at now is how it is reproduced that the capitalist has his capital and how it is reproduced that the worker has labor power. And then what we are going to find first of all is the process of reproduction.

In this process of reproduction, the movement of an individual capital is not simply at stake. What is at stake is the movement of capital, of the unity of the process of social production and consumption. Because the fact that there is labor power and means of production available for the different productive activities of society, so that society can reproduce its production process, what is at stake is the unity of the general movement. And in order to look at that unity, Marx is going to make a purely formal separation from deployment. In this formal separation, what he is going to differentiate is between a reproduction where the new cycle that is going to begin is identical to the cycle that ends, from which it emerges, in which the one that is the opening of the next one is identical to the one that generated it, to the opening of the previous one; and the process in which the multiplication of value will be reflected in an increase in the mass of available capital, and consequently in an increase in the mass of social production. And then there he is going to separate between simple reproduction and reproduction on an expanded scale or accumulation of capital.

To be able to look at a simple reproduction. What he is going to raise several times in the development is that it is a question of a methodological nature with respect to a process of an analytical nature. If one already knows the simple movement, the extended movement is nothing more than the simple movement + a difference. And then, if one knows the simple movement first, when one faces the enlarged, one faces something that in a substantial part one already knows, and the only problem one has is to know what goes beyond that, not to face it again from scratch. And then it's going to structure this whole section on that basis.

There are two conditions for reproduction to be identical to itself. The first condition is that surplus value is annihilated as a source of expansion of production; And consequently, we must forget that the purpose of the movement of capital is not the production of use values for the life of the capitalist, we must leave aside that the capitalist is not the subject, he is nothing more than the personification of that movement, the subject is capital. And in simple reproduction, what we are going to face is the capitalist consuming surplus value, so that there is no capacity to increase production, to change the scale of production. And the second issue that plays a role in this is that the movement of capital to increase the productivity of labor is excluded, which was governed by the production of relative surplus value. And consequently, in this simple reproduction there can be no change in the materiality of the work.

When development continues (I put it to synthesize it here) and Marx has deployed all the determinations of simple reproduction, he will begin to look at expanded reproduction, how capital, now, accumulates. And in expanded reproduction it will separate these two determinations that we look at here. That there is simply surplus value, that the new capital is converted under the same

technical conditions as before, that is, that only absolute surplus value can be extended, that there is more and more labor power put into operation, always with the same technical conditions. And only after this is developed, is it that it will look at the process of expanded reproduction based on the production of relative surplus value. So we are going to move forward, the chapters are accompanying that development.

What Marx is going to propose, as ways of separating these things, is: here, society needs to reproduce itself, so it cannot stop producing. And so this is a process of continuous renewal of production, that's why it's a process of reproduction. In order to be able to reproduce *itself in any condition*, replacing itself—which leads to something proper to simple reproduction—it needs to produce the same thing that it has just consumed or is going to consume in this production. And in order to be able to make this material reproduction, it needs to have means of production that are going to enter into the process of productive consumption differentiated from the process of material consumption. And what I am going to propose is: this mass of means of production is produced that are going to enter productive consumption, which replenishes the means of production. In this production cycle, the means of production produced in the previous production cycle will be consumed, they will come to replace those that are used. And in general, the means of production are separate from the means of life, materially they are different things. Consequently, we have on the one hand the replacement of this productive consumption and on the other hand the reproduction of this individual consumption. Okay. Did anyone want to raise something?

Javiera: Yes, me, Juan. Before what you have entered now, which is individual consumption, you raise something that generated doubts in me. I imagine that it is the prelude to what comes later in the last chapters on primitive accumulation, but without going into that, I do not understand well the meaning of the mention he makes of original accumulation a little before the proposal. Because what I understood is like: this process began at some point, the process of mere simple reproduction. So there he mentions this idea of primitive accumulation. I don't know if we can turn that around.

JIC: A little bit comes after what I wanted...

Javiera: Okay, give it to you, Juan.

JIC: It seems that I have swallowed it, I take it anyway. This is a process of reproduction, it must have started somewhere. Only once, the first time, was it not a process of reproduction. There is a point at which the capital that is put into operation in this new cycle is not the product of the capital that was in place in the previous cycle. So that is the reference he is going to make to primitive accumulation. There is a starting point, but then what will appear is: that does not matter until here, so far what matters is the reproduction of this movement. But that's why it comes a little later, now I'm going to that. Because it starts at that, it flows into that of primitive accumulation, already showing that even in the process of simple reproduction, the worker is paid with the product of his own labor.

Because when one simply looked at the cycle of capital in its valorization in the process of production, one resource that had been appealed to and manifested was that everyone knows that the worker is paid for labor power after he has worked, and that therefore the worker opens credit to the capitalist. But in order to look at the movement of capital in its purity, the situation was going to be turned upside down: it was going to be considered that the capitalist paid the worker in advance the value of the labor power, so that the movement of variable capital would be revealed. And here, the first thing that Marx is going to show is how reproduction is going to show that the worker, even under the appearance that the value of labor power is being advanced to him, is paid with the product of his own labor.

And there, the first step that he is going to take in this is the proposal of: well, the worker is simply paid what was previously set aside in order to be able to look at the movement of capital in its cycle of valorization in its purity, which is that labor power is paid once the worker has produced the commodities and the commodities have been realized, have been converted into money, and that therefore, when the worker receives that money, that portion of the value of the commodity sold is paid to him a posteriori. In reality, it is the product of the new work done by the worker who is going to receive it as payment for the labor power that he has already consumed, that he has already applied productively. And so, up to this point, what appears is the evidence, simply, beyond looking at the cycle of reproduction, that even looking at the cycle of production that the worker is paid after having sold and transformed into money the product of his own labor, and therefore the value he receives is a value that he himself has produced, however, this is not enough to liquidate the appearance that he is paid with capital that is not the product of his own labor. This appearance subsists in the processes of production where from the moment the capital was disbursed or the production cycle began until that capital returns valorized, the time of payment of labor power is longer than the cycle.

I try to put it in simple terms: the bakery worker, clearly, is paid his salary with the value that he himself produced in several production cycles that he was carrying out, and only later does he receive his salary. But (I will give a case which is the polar opposite) the labourer who works on a forest plantation receives his wages many times before the product of his labour has attained the condition of use-value, has been sold and has been converted into money. And so, this fact that the worker is made aware that he is paid with the product of his own labor is valid for a substantial part of social productions, but it is not absolutely valid, it does not completely destroy the appearance because there are other workers where this does not happen.

Alejandro: My question... It was totally related to the branch of production in which that capital operates in that example you mention and how in each branch that capital has a shorter or longer rotation cycle. But how would the question that it has to be paid by labour-power several times before it has sold the particular commodity it produces come to be solved by the concrete capital operating in a branch with a longer cycle? There's some role in the credit, right?

JIC: But that's on the sidelines, because someone has to put up the capital. If there is credit, someone puts up the capital. Here we leave aside... Marx, at the beginning of the chapter, puts it out: all the concrete forms that surplus value takes, the form that capital has, which is capital that is on credit and so on, all of that is left out. It doesn't matter who puts in, but someone puts in. It appears that in fact the bakery capitalist does not need to have the capital to pay wages. But the forestry capitalist does need to have the capital to pay wages. I took forestation, but there are countless branches of social production with a salary that is paid by the fortnight. I don't know if the complete production of a more or less complex machinery... It may take more than fifteen days, the production of a ship takes more than fifteen days.

Alejandro: The branches, for example, of military production. Specifically, I have been informing myself about the development of aircraft by Russia because of the war in Ukraine and they are projects that are 15-20 years old.

JIC: They have years of development. Iván, I don't know what you wanted to propose.

Iván: What I wanted to ask you, just thinking about the example of the boat, which has obviously been going on for much more than a month or years and so on. Obviously, the capitalist has to pay wages, that is, he has to consume capital in the payment of labor power, but that is in the first cycle of production. That is to say, already in the second cycle, the second ship that is produced, and then that second ship is somehow all produced with the money of the workers themselves.

JIC: Well, but that's why we're going step by step [...], because what appeared here was in the most immediate form, which is the fact that the capitalist's money functions as a means of payment with what the worker pays him, and then a first evidence appears: that it is not universal. There is still more to be developed. So, let's continue to follow that development. Where, moreover, even in the case of the ship, this is the case: the labourer who is in the immediate example is clearly paid immediately with the produce of his own labour, because he is the one who produced the bread which is being sold and with which he is being paid. In the case of the ship, it may be the same worker or it may be another worker. And he is being paid, at best, with the product of his own previous labor. Which, now let's look, comes to replace something that is not... there is a determination that goes beyond this.

It is still a formal determination, but one that goes beyond simply that the capital used by the capitalist to pay for labor power is the product of the workers' previous labor. So, we are accompanying the deployment that he is making. It starts with something that is visible but that, just as it is visible, can immediately be opposed to it in a situation in which it is not visible. Is that clear? So let's continue to accompany the movement, which is going to take us to the things that Alejandro wants later, he has to synthesize about the talk on November 7. We continue.

And now, on the basis that he is paid simply with the product of his own labour, with the value produced by the worker, what is going to appear is that, since the worker also produced surplus value, he produces the consumption fund of himself and also the consumption fund of the capitalist. Marx is going to make this development to show or unfold this situation in which not only the worker produces variable capital (which he took with the evidence of the times of payment), but how all the capitalist's capital, not only the variable capital, is the product of the worker's labor.

And then, he is going to ask what is the fund of means of life that allows the reproduction of the life process of society because it sustains the labor force that is engaged in production. And then what appears is that this fund of means of subsistence passes through the hands of the capitalist in the form of the return of his capital, and the substitution of the capital which he had in the form of labour-power into the capital which he now has as the value of his commodities. And what it is going to have as a movement, now is where it comes in that process of reproducing, which is evident that the set of... [...][263]. The mass of the values of the means of subsistence which is to be consumed by the working population appears for the first time in the movement as a part of the capitalist's capital-value, together with surplus-value, and then passes into the hands of the working population in the form of the value of labour-power. Let's see if I can put it in clearer terms.

When we look at this first demonstration, because the worker is paid after his product has already been converted into money, the movement goes beyond that. It follows that if it became money which is not in the hands of the worker, the product of his labour now has the material form of the mass of commodities produced. And the value of this mass of commodities produced is the value of what is going to be used to replace the value of labor power and what is going to be surplus value. Where did the value that is going to come to replace labor power come from, not to pay the worker who made this production, so that his worker reproduces the labor power he spent, but so that he produces his new labor power that is going to be consumed in the next productive cycle? That is where, when one moves on to the next productive cycle, it becomes evident that the value materialized in the means of subsistence that the workers are going to consume is the product that those same workers have previously produced. Was it understood?

Alejandro: I think I understood something, but I don't know if I'm right. It is that the value that appears to be materialized in these means of subsistence that are bought with wages is also produced by the very exercise of labor power, let's say, of the workers.

JIC: What I want to try to relate is this. Here one has to look, in the simplest terms, at two production cycles. When one looked at an isolated cycle of production, it might immediately appear that the worker was paid with the value he himself had produced, provided that he was paid afterwards, that the money the worker received was the realization of the value he had just produced. Only in that

[263] It is self-correcting later.

case was this evident. Now: when one looks at the fact that the worker produced a mass of value that is materialized in the commodity, and it is materialized together with surplus value, that mass of value, the worker has not yet received it (let's put it that way): he is going to receive it so that he is in a position to enter into the process of production that follows.

When we look at the two linked processes, what we have is: what was the product of work in the first cycle now appears as the condition for the worker to be able to work in the next cycle. Now the worker, although the value of his labor power is being advanced, is being given the use values that he himself produced in the previous cycle. It is the product of his own labor—whether he is paid later or not—that will enable him to regain the labor power to function in the next cycle. So, in this movement, the condition of financing – to put the term – of the commodity and the wage does not matter, it does not matter how long the production process lasts: there it is evident that all the workers who have to replace their labor power and return to work are being handed over, in exchange for the availability of that labor power that they are going to use in the second cycle, which was already the product of his work in the previous cycle. That they are confronted as someone else's property, because now that mass of value that the workers produced is in the hands of the capitalists, it is presented to them as someone else's property that is going to buy back their labor power with the value that they produced in the previous cycle. The product of their labor in a cycle in the form of produced value is what confronts them as variable capital in the pocket of the capitalist who is going to buy their labor power. I don't know if it was clearer now.

Alejandro: Yes. In fact, that would be a foundation by which when chapter IV and value began, this salary as a means of payment could be abstracted and the phenomenon analyzed as in its purity, right? Would that be a foundation or would we have to see some more mediation?

JIC: Let's see... Well, I would have to answer yes and no. Because one is looking at the movement of an individual capital in chapter V, and it does not simply correspond to the movement of individual capital. Then it wouldn't be so immediately... Because one could look at it as: well, here is the reason why what was in chapter V was being supposed. And here it is being put on, here it is being shown what it is, but it is not so immediately related. That would be something to think about. There are things that would lead me to say yes, this thing that something that was supposed to be put on, determination is unfolding, but the link is not so immediate.

Javiera: Following this example of the forestry branch, then you go to what you just said. It is immaterial whether the product, for example eucalyptus, takes ten years to produce; This rotation time is indifferent because in the end what is being paid to its workers who are producing the forestry branch is what they already produced in the previous eucalyptus cycle, right?

JIC: It has nothing to do with the immediate question, it is the general movement of capital. When a more complex situation appears later with this, what will appear is: so far, as facts, simple reproduction... Let's put it like this: this is going to end up

leading to the unfolding of a movement, but up to this point it has the character of an analytical process. So analysis looks first at a thing that is seen immediately, an immediate manifestation, but that immediate manifestation is associated with individual situations. Which is whether you are paid before or you are paid after it was sold or before it is sold. But the step to which this immediate thing leads him is that from the immediate—from saying, well, he is paid with the value he produced—what follows is: well, but he not only produced the value with which he is paid, but he also produced the mass of new value that there is. This mass of new value corresponds to the part of the value of the total labour power, which will appear as the "fund of means of subsistence" necessary for the reproduction of the process of social life. Now we have to look at it as a fund of means of living, it is no longer the product of this worker who is being paid with the product of his labor. It is now the totality of the value of labour-power, which is a new value generated by the previous labour of the workers embodied in the mass of newly produced means of subsistence, and which passes into the hands of the capitalist.

Well, that has already been made clear: that mass of value is the value produced by the labor of the mass of workers. Now, what are they going to receive? They are going to receive this mass of value and they are going to buy that mass of means of subsistence that they themselves produced. And with that mass of means of subsistence that they themselves produced, they are going to reproduce their labor power. With what are they going to have reproduced their labor power? With the product of their own labor. What is it that reappears in the value of its labor power? The value they have produced. Up to this point constant capital is left out, now it is going to appear. So, now it is no longer a problem whether he is paid sooner or later: now it is that in the unity of the movement, the labor power of the workers is bought by capital with the previous product of the labor of the workers.

Since there is simple reproduction here, the workers are always the same: here there are no new workers, at most what there would be would be a worker who comes to replace the old worker who died. But strictly, in simple terms, there are no new workers here. The workers as a whole are then paid with the product of their own labor. This is what is at stake there. So, now it disappeared from the demonstration, from the problem, whether this particular worker was paid after the commodity that he produced was sold, or before it was sold. Now in this movement of simple reproduction what one has is that the mass of use values, of means of subsistence that the mass of workers is going to buy, is the product of the mass of workers. And therefore this variable capital, in reproduction, is the product in reproduction, except for the first time.

Since variable capital is consumed, disappears, is not preserved, assuming this original accumulation, this original capital of the capitalist functioned the first time. But on that first time, that capital disappeared. The labor power in which it had materialized disappeared and that mass of value no longer exists. Now there is a new value created by the labor of the workers that comes to take the place of the variable capital that had "genuinely" come out of the capitalist's original pocket. Now what comes out of the capitalist's pocket to buy labor power is always a value that the workers themselves have produced. Materially, this original capital was annihilated. It doesn't exist anymore. Do you understand?

Javiera: But where does that original capital come from?

JIC: It doesn't matter. What he says is that, except for the first time, it is not known where he came from. It is not the product of the work of these same workers because the labor power of these workers had to be bought. This time it was not the product of the workers' previous work. As this variable capital began to work, it was annihilated and now there is a new mass of value which is the product of the labor of these workers, who replaced that capital. But that original capital is no longer there, from now on, it is always the product of the work of the workers. Is it? I got terribly entangled.

Alejandro: Juan, here is a kind of development that also in my opinion responds to what Marx had developed between the chapter... it can be V and VI, with respect to the capitalist, who appeared ideologically as a social benefactor, who in reality is not a benefactor, but rather that pocket that appears to buy the labor power is the product of the worker's own labor.

JIC: What is implicit here – and Marx does not make it specifically clear, he will do so later – are the appearances of the buying and selling of labour power in circulation and the content of those appearances, which is: in the form of the exchange of equivalents, equality, what is enclosed is the exploitation of the worker by capital. Something we are already facing. And it appears... I am not going to put it in relation to a discussion I have because we reproduce it more or less continuously, with Néstor Laverne... Since there are two and I don't remember his middle name, I'm going to say father and son, "the old one" and "the young one." This is the young man. And he maintains that what I am proposing, that this appearance is already evident in the section on absolute surplus value. He says that it is only evident when what we are looking at here is finished, where the capitalist's capital comes from. My point of view is that what is going to be highlighted here is the content of another appearance: what is the private property that governs the capitalist mode of production. That exploitation is already evident in production.

When Marx makes these observations that you mention, Alejandro, the question one has is how far one is advancing and how far are the elements already in place to make this type of proposal. Because it appears several times that there is a preview of movements that only later will he fully deploy and found. So I would have to look at that of the beneficiary again. Because it appears that he returns to him what he actually pays him... the worker with the same thing that the worker produced for him. If it corresponds to when one is looking at the process of production of capital, or if it corresponds to when one is looking at the process of reproduction of capital. And there this would be the observation: if at that point the determinations that allow the proposal to be made are fully present, or if there is a certain advance of determinations.

[II]

We begin to look at simple reproduction, which implies that the surplus value is spent by the capitalist on his individual consumption. And then we were looking, in the process of reproduction, at what is seen with respect to the source of the capitalist's capital. And we look at the question of variable capital, with what I said earlier, that, since variable capital is consumed every time labor power is put to work, labor power is spent, that value disappears, and labor power creates a new value that comes to replace the original value. And if the capitalist's capital had originally sprang from something that is external to the process of reproduction of capital, now, once the first cycle of production has elapsed, the capitalist's variable capital is the product of the work of the workers and is renewed, in each cycle of the reproduction of capital the previous variable capital is consumed and now there is a new work of the workers that comes to replace that capital. variable capital. That's what we had up to that point, is there anything with this? So we continue.

Marx goes a step further by saying: but it is not only this that makes the capitalist's capital become accumulated surplus value. The capitalist in order to reproduce his natural life needs to expend a certain mass of value. Since it is simple reproduction, this mass of value is equivalent to surplus value. And here, in reality, the analysis that has been made contains one more determination that is not simply presented in Marx's deployment. Because what he proposes is: well, the capitalist consumes this surplus value that the workers produced and replaces the capital. [...] He says: if one divides the capitalist's original capital by the value of annual consumption, that gives him in how many years the capital of the original capitalist was replaced by surplus value. But this raises a further question: whether the capitalist lives on the product of his own labour or on his original wealth, or whether he lives on the gratuitous appropriation of surplus value which he makes of the workers. Because if one looks at it as the capitalist simply eats up the surplus value and replaced the capital (leaving aside the part of the variable capital), this movement that Marx is proposing does not occur. The question at stake here is this: when does the capitalist live on the product of the labor of others?

In the first year, if the capitalist already lives on the product of the labour of others, the surplus value is consumed, and the capital remains the original capital, not the product of the labour of the workers, because on the part of the variable capital we already know that this is the product of the labour of the workers. but for the part of constant capital he simply recovered the value of his original constant capital and reapplied it. So what does the capitalist live on? If he lives from the outset of the consumption of surplus value, it is clear that he lives on the product of the labor of others, but if what we are going to propose is that he lives on the product of his own labor or on the wealth that he had originally accumulated, then the deployment that Marx is making appears. Because what happens to the capitalist is that, since it does not produce value... It is stated that it does not produce value because it does not operate directly as a productive laborer of value, the capitalist can never produce surplus value because he does not buy his own labor power, but he can produce value if he operates productively from

the point of view of the production of use value. But it is taken as if he is simply the one who lives on surplus value.

Since he has to consume a quantity of value in order to reproduce his life, he either lives on the labor of the workers or lives on the product of what appeared to be his own labor, the original capital. But if he lives on the product of his own labour, in the first year he has eaten up a part of the original capital which corresponds to the value of his consumption. And in order to put that moving capital back into production, it has to replace that part that it ate, and since that part that was eaten corresponds to the value of surplus value, the only source it has to replace what it ate is with surplus value. And so his capital is now a part of the original capital and a first portion of surplus value that was converted into new capital. The second one comes, and then he puts his capital back into production and the same thing happens to him: he needs to consume. And either he is going to consume the surplus value of the workers, or he is going to live on the product of what appears to be his own labor, and then he has to eat another piece of the original capital. And it has to replace it, so it has to take the surplus value generated that year and incorporate it into its capital to replace this part. And now its capital has a remainder of original capital and a part formed by the first surplus value, and now by the second surplus value that was accumulated. And so until the capitalist has eaten up his original capital, all his capital is now made up of accumulated surplus-value, and in fact the capitalist disposes of only the surplus-value produced by his workers for his individual consumption.

It is then in a certain sense as if it were a process of a formal nature, that the capitalist's original capital was formally replaced by accumulated surplus value. Then we will see what happens beyond that. And so, what Marx is going to propose here is that the capitalist's capital is made up of the product of the labor of others appropriated for free, it is accumulated surplus value. Then, that determination is going to appear, which for me has a formal character. Moreover, what refers to variable capital is the product of the *paid* labor of the workers, and here what is being presented is all capital as the product of the *unpaid labor* of the workers. In the following chapter there will appear a further step in the development, not of this formal transformation, but of a real transformation of the capitalist's capital into accumulated surplus value. Yes, Aristides?

Aristides: I know that we are in the general determinations, but the original capital here in terms of concrete forms implies that the appearance of the first capitals comes from the old form of social organization, from capitals that have been able to go, even in an organizational form where the commodity is not the general relation, but it is already present. and they were accumulating that capital, and at some point in this development they have to make the leap to another form where they can generate surplus value and accumulate that capital.

JIC: That is not the origin that one could give to this capital, for a double thing. First, because in reality the origin is not asked. He says: there was once a starting point. At this starting point, capital cannot have sprung from the labor of the workers because it is the first time that labor power has been bought from them to produce surplus value. It is abstracting from the historical origin; what appears is:

well here we are going to see how this is reproduced. But the first time it was given. The other way of looking at it has to do with what the capitalist lives on. What did we know until now *before* capitalist production as the possibility of having money so that it could later function as capital? The commodity producer who sold his commodities and transformed them into money. And this is what later in the chapter on primitive accumulation, when he makes reference to the myth that the capitalist's original capital is the product of his own labor, which corresponds to when we look at the appearances of circulation and this appears to us that equality prevails because equivalents are exchanged, freedom because both are free individuals, and private property.

Marx does not specify it, but one can associate it with the prevailing private property based on labor itself, because that is the private property that he saw until chapter IV in Volume 1, the only private property that appeared in the first three chapters of *Capital* was private property based on labor. Here it is as if that situation were implicit, that is why I add to the way in which Marx puts it of saying: well, if I divide the mass of capital by the mass of surplus value, I know in how many years the capitalist's capital was replaced by surplus value, that implies that the capitalist consumed his original capital that came from his own labor, and now not only has his capital become accumulated surplus value, but he also lives off the surplus value that is going to be generated. So, there is no development on what the origin of that capital is, the only thing that is present is that it is not the product of the work of the workers. If one traces it back to simple commodity production, it would be the product of the capitalist's own labor. When we get to the chapter on primitive accumulation we will see references to this. So that, there is no attempt to explain where that capital came from, only that it did not come from the labor of the workers

Aristides: Okay. That is, because there are many people out there who take up the chapter of primitive accumulation to try to explain to me historical stages where capitalism would have emerged, and all these discussions about America and the modes of production, etc. They cling to that very thing without taking into account the process that Marx is unfolding.

JIC: Let's leave it for when we get there. Because here it is openly posed as an analytical question: it is clear that the first time it cannot have come out of this, because if not, it would not be the first time. It came from somewhere, we don't care where it came from. But what happens to it when this is reproduced? Which becomes accumulated surplus value.

Aristides: It is like when in chapter IV labor power appears as given.

JIC: Exactly. It is: what are the conditions for this to be. He even makes the clarification in Chapter IV that it is clear that the producer separated from his means of production cannot be a natural condition, that he must be the product of a historical process in which he has been separated from the means of production. But he says this that here we are going to do the same as the capitalist: there is doubly free labor power, and then we have to explain where it came from. What matters to the capitalist is that there is this doubly free labor power, and we are

going to take it in this condition, and then development will appear... Not where it came from yet, that is in the chapter of primitive accumulation, but what that labor power is, how that labor power is determined.

So, we move on. The role played by this development that we have just seen is that simple reproduction itself is already putting us in front of this transformation, of this evidence of a (so to speak) qualitative change with respect to capital. Because when we looked at the process of production, the capital was the property of the capitalist and it never appeared where the capitalist had taken it from, and now it appears what the process of starting over implies. Now, although we are not looking at capital accumulating, what we are seeing is that capital is accumulated surplus value, and consequently, it is beginning to appear that if we had already talked about the fact that the first appearance of equivalent exchange is the exploitation of the worker by capital, now the capitalist private property that one could base on one's own work begins to appear to be based on the free appropriation of the product of the work of others.

What follows is a whole development in which Marx starts with what we have already seen so far, which is the process of productive consumption of labor power by the capitalist who bought that labor power. But there is another consumption to which we referred when we looked at the value of labor power, but now we are going to look at what happens in that process, which is the process of individual consumption that the worker does to produce himself. It is no longer the worker's labor power owned by the capitalist, and that labor power is carried in the person of the worker, but now it is the process of the worker's personal life, it is the individual consumption that the worker makes in order to reproduce himself as a living subject. In a way, what we looked at before is what happens to the individual consumption of the capitalist: he eats his original capital and has to replace it with accumulated surplus value. Now it is what happens in the process of the "private" life of the worker.

He is going to make the reference to the fact that when we looked at the working day, we saw the abuses that could imply that capital, by extending the working day, advanced on the possibility of the worker to consume the use values necessary to reproduce his labor power normally. But he says that this does not make the essence, it is not an inherent abuse of the capitalist process of production, it was presented as a deviation from the normality of capitalist reproduction. And here I am going to stop before accompanying the development that Marx is making in the content of this. What happens to the process of individual consumption of the worker?

The process of individual consumption of the worker is at the same time a process of production: it is the process of production of a commodity: of the worker's labor power. So, when the worker consumes individually, what he is doing is reproducing this part of the capital that is going to function as variable capital. No matter how much the worker is consuming for himself, what is happening to him is that he is producing this commodity which is his labor power, which, like any producer of commodities, what happens to him is a non-use value for himself: it has to be a use value for the buyer. And so, what Marx is going to say

is: if we look not at an isolated capitalist and an isolated worker, but at the capitalist class and the working class and we look at the reproduction of the capitalist production process, what we are going to have is that what the capitalist is doing is converting a part of his capital into labor power, and this is what will allow it to fully value its capital. And then, he says: "Thus, within the limits of what is absolutely necessary," as far as the value of labor power is concerned, "the individual consumption of the working class converts the capital paid in exchange for labor power into a new labor power exploitable by capital," and then "*the individual consumption of the worker*" is a moment[264] "of the production and reproduction of capital."[265]. What seems to happen outside the realm of capital, which appears to occur in the private realm of the worker's personal life, is a movement of capital. And he goes on to expand on this by saying: "It does not matter that the worker carries out his individual consumption for his own benefit and not for the benefit of the capitalist."[266] He seems to have been pursuing a personal interest when he sold his labour-power, and yet what is involved in his personal interest is the reproduction of capital—not of mere individual capital, but of the general unity of the movement of the reproduction of capital.

And so, it's going to keep moving forward. And I would like to return to this, in particular, because at the beginning we looked at many developments that appear within Marxism and then we half stopped doing it, but here it is worth returning. But I'm going to fill in first. He says: the consumption that the worker makes from the point of view of capital is only productive to the extent that it reproduces labor power according to the needs of capital and puts it back in a condition to function. If the worker, for some reason, could consume more use-values than those which are necessary for his reproduction, this consumption from the point of view of capital is unproductive, it is of no use to him. And then, from the point of view of the worker, his individual consumption is unproductive for him, because all he does is reproduce it in the same conditions in which it was. It says: "[...] it is productive only *for the capitalist and for the state*, since it reproduces the *wealth-producing force for others*."[267] And so the individual consumption of the worker is a moment of the movement of capital, the individual life of the worker outside the process of production is a moment of the life of capital.

And what is going to appear is the worker himself who, through his individual consumption, permanently renews the conditions to be exploited by capital. Marx is going to sum it up in these terms: "Therefore, from the social point of view, the working class", because it is not simply the individual worker, it is the working class and the capitalist class in the unity of this process of reproduction, "even outside the direct process of labour, it is *an attribute* of capital, neither more nor less than inanimate instruments. Even their individual consumption is, within certain limits", because of what is necessary to reproduce the labor power, "[...] a mere factor in the process of reproduction of capital."[268]

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[264] In the text it says "factor".

[265] Marx, K. (1977: 481), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

[266] Ibid. And Marx continues: "The fattening of working cattle is still a necessary factor in the production process because the cattle enjoy what they eat."

[267] Ibid., p. 482.

[268] Ibid.

The term in FCE's translation is as "attribute", in Justo's translation, if I remember correctly, it is as an "element" of capital, and in Siglo XXI, as an "appendix". In my opinion, the one that best reflects the German word used by Marx (which can be translated in any of these ways), is the term "attribute": it belongs to capital. "Element" is closer together, but "appendix" is something that is added to a main body, and gives the idea that it is not the movement of the main body. So it is this: the worker in his human corporeality is a part of this social relation that has been inverted; The human being is no longer the immediate subject of the process of social metabolism, of which the human subject, the worker, is an attribute, a moment of this, he is the object that serves the reproduction of this concrete subject, which is capital. And so, what we have here is that the appearance that we found in circulation (Marx does not make it explicit, but it is clearly displayed) with respect to the buying and selling of labor power, that what prevails is personal interest, Bentham (as an expression of personal interest). And in reality, in the form that the worker pursues his personal interest, what he does is to satisfy a need of capital: the reproduction of labor power, which is the source of the valorization of capital.

Marx goes further in this way in the way he says: the capitalist does not have to deal with this. That the worker consumes in order to reproduce the productive attributes that capital demands of him is a problem of the individual worker, because if not, he dies. And since he consumed, the means of subsistence disappeared and he has no choice but to go again to sell his labor power. And he goes on to add:

> The Roman slave was bound by chains to the will of his master; the wage-labourer was subjected to the rule of his master by means of invisible threads. The constant change of employer and the *fictio iuris* of the employment contract, keep the appearance of his free personality standing.[269]

And here we are faced with another appearance of circulation: that freedom reigns here. The worker is free to sell his labor power to a capitalist or to another capitalist, but he is not free not to sell his labor power, he is a forced worker for the total capital of society, he is forced to sell his labor power. He sold it, he disposed of the means of livelihood that allowed him to reproduce; now they have no more means of living, and the only way to regain access to the means of subsistence is to sell their labour power again. The legal fiction is that he is a free individual, he has no obligation to sell his labor power, but if he does not sell his labor power he has no way to restore his natural life. There had been some intervention...

Alejandro [Chat]: This is a contrast with what you say in the *Manuscripts* of 1844, isn't it?

JIC: In what sense? To answer you whether it is true or not from my point of view, I would need you to tell me about what.

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[269] Ibid.

Alejandro: Basically, this thing that the worker appeared, when he left the production process, as if in his personal life his freedom was realized, precisely in what would be his animal functions. That is what I was referring to. Here it is clear that this appearance of freedom has as its content the alienation in the total capital of society.

JIC: It is. But it appears to the worker as if he were effectively free from capital in his individual consumption. For it appears to the consciousness of the worker in this form that it is his will that governs what he is going to consume, and it is concealed that his will is determined by the necessity of capital to reproduce itself with certain productive attributes. So, if he consumes something that is not necessary to reproduce his labor power with the attributes that capital demands of it, when he wants to sell it, since it has no use value for the buyer because it does not have the qualitative conditions that the buyer requires, he will not be able to sell it, as happens to any seller of commodities. And therefore, what his conscience tells him is that he has to consume those use-values that allow him to reproduce his labor power.

If cinema is within the consumption necessary to reproduce its labor power, its will tells it: well, today I'm going to the cinema. But his will tells him: yes, I have to go once a week (this is from another historical period). Now: if I feel like going to the movies every day and I spent the money I had to spend on — let's put it in the near future — to train my labor force, I'm going to sell it and I don't have the labor force to sell. Or I had to eat something to have physical strength and I didn't eat it because I spent the money going to the movies; I have no physical strength, my labor power is not a use value for capital and I have been left without social relations. I always come back to this in the final analysis: the individual who was left without a social relationship was left without being able to participate in social consumption, to reproduce his natural life, and he died.

So, from the *Manuscripts* of 1844 to the present [(*Capital*)], we have to think that there are [...] 22 years. In those 22 years, the things that Marx had seen in the *Manuscripts* and that remain open to him... This is the answer to things that had been raised there, and I don't want to advance it because I want to leave it for when we finish, but it is very particularly what I had synthesized *The Jewish Question*, where he makes a synthesis and... it is clear that there is no explanation, there it is: "This is this, this is this, this is this... and it can only be transformed into this other", but he has no way of explaining how it is going to be transformed into this other. And when one looks at the development that he makes, in particular, in Volume 1, it is the unfolding of how what he saw there develops.

Aristides: When I read it I got the feeling, and now that you brought it back, and also from Alejandro, I feel a little contradictory. Because if the consumption of the worker and what his conscience dictates individually is an attribute of capital, this thing about there being unproductive consumption... As if it is outside the production process of labor power, that there is something outside, a consumption that does not contribute to the formation of labor power. Because it seems that I choose, I don't know, to go fishing on the weekend with my son, and that I am not

training my labor force there; It seems that there is a dimension in which I rebel or am dodging the need for capital.

JIC: *It seems*. Now, why is going fishing with your child on the weekend—because you can't go fishing with your child every day—not part of the reproduction of your labor force? Why is going to the cinema not part of the reproduction of the labor power of a worker who has to have images of a certain ...?

I'm going to put it in these terms: cinema has several elements that one could look at. He has first to [...] show him a world that is beyond the immediacy of his personal life. Which gives that worker a certain universality. And we saw that capital needed the worker to have, with the development of machinery, a certain development of that universality, of its recognition, of identifying himself as an individual capable of participating in a process of collective work, etc. But also, when the intensity of the work has a certain degree, when the individual watches an entertainment movie, what he does is download... replenish the capacity and then continue with the intensity. If you keep the intensity all the time, you won't be able to work the next day. In addition, cinema has a whole ideological role of identification with the characters and with the artists that makes the reproduction of a consciousness that is a free appearance and that is alienated. That's what we talked about the other time with artistic production, the role of artists in social life and professional athletes. So, it is a necessary consumption to reproduce a certain labor force.

There are two ways I had to put it. In the classical economics courses, which at one time was the first subject that all students at the General Sarmiento University had... not all of them, but those linked to social sciences went through the course of that classical economics that was Smith, Ricardo and Marx, and what I gave was Marx's part, the first volume of *Capital* very synthesized. When he got to this point, he made a little drawing on the blackboard when he had to put the value of labor power, and he said: let's suppose that the worker has to eat a fried egg and a loaf of bread, that is all he needs to reproduce his labor power. And he drew them. When he got to this point, he would say: but instead of eating the fried egg and the bread, the worker wants to either feel a little warmth in his body—and he drew a bottle of alcoholic beverage—or he wants to feel "spiritual warmth"—and he bought a book. If this was not what he needed to consume in order to reproduce his labor power, he was left without labor power.

It is clear that a worker who has to do intellectual work needs to consume the things that reproduce his capacity for intellectual work. And the worker who has to manage capital... We talked about it there: the value of his labor power includes that he becomes a member of the club where he has to be, that he sends his children to the school they have to go to, that he has the car he has to have, so that he does not see himself as a worker, to differentiate himself from everyone else. And that is a part of the value of the labor force. The individual does not consume that and does not have the productive attributes that the capital of that worker requires.

Thus, all the consumption of the worker *on average* is the consumption that reproduces his labor power. Then it is clear that more or less indistinct labor forces can be produced, not necessarily with exactly the same individual consumptions, but with a package, with a basket of certain types of consumptions. The worker who works with an intensity (which we have already seen the shortening of the working day), cannot work 7 days a week, 14 hours. To reproduce its labor power it has to work 5 days a week, 8 hours. And today what appears is that 8 hours, five days a week, for a certain type of worker, the intensity of his work does not allow him to reproduce his labor power. So, what one has is this. Marx puts somewhere somewhere in consumption that goes beyond what seems to be necessary. From my point of view, everything that consumes, that forms the value of labour-power, and therefore that which is paid to the labourer, is necessary consumption for capital.

[…] Now what is going to seem is that, we have just since the worker is a forced worker for capital for the total capital of society, what happens to the workers who do the work of managing capital? They are individuals whose life is to manage capital. One says: they are individuals who receive... not as a simple value of their labor power, that is what one has to look beyond that: there are indeed representation expenses; and because they manage it, there is an appropriation of part of the capital. But there are individuals who receive 10 million dollars per year. And one says: if I were paid 10 million a year, I wouldn't even work for a year. I'll work for a month, two months, and then I'm going to do something else. That individual who is paid 10 million per year... In addition, he is paid... The other thing is that, in order to exercise coercion, he is paid when he retires: not when he feels like it, [only] if he stays working for that capital until capital decides that it is no longer useful to him. And then, what for the individual is premature, but for capital is the right thing to do, stops buying labor power from him and the individual does not know what to do with his life, because all the reproduction of his subjectivity is to function as the personification of capital. So, when you look at what you consume... And he has to ask himself what role that he consumes plays in the reproduction of his labor power as a commodity for capital. And how his conscience, which tells him that he has to consume this or that, is the bearer of the needs of capital.

We have already talked about it, I think, the issue of tobacco consumption. That is becoming the awareness of a certain part of the young generations that tobacco consumption is harmful and they do not consume tobacco. I asked it last year: where does the fight against smoking come from? It is born from the political organizations of the working class. With the proposal that he does not really recognize why the worker consumes tobacco, despite the fact that it is harmful to health. Because what is the proposal of the socialists and communists (I don't know if it is the anarchists, because I don't know if they allowed themselves to have an opinion or not about what others consumed)? It is: tobacco has a threefold harmful effect on the worker. First, because it harms their health (this has been known since the end of the nineteenth century); it is a narcotic, it takes away the worker's combative spirit; and instead of spending money on things he needs to improve his own reproduction of his life, he wastes it here. And there is a whole struggle: they say that Lenin did not allow smoking in his presence, because it was

this conscience; and here there was a strong campaign by the Socialist Party against smoking with these arguments, without much result, beyond individual results. And tobacco is spreading absolutely.

When I studied at the university, I was a passive smoker but... The classroom was a cloud of smoke. I had a teacher who lit the new cigarette with the pucho of the previous one. What happened? Natural life was prolonged. The process of training the labor force was prolonged, so that the worker could not yet enter to work. And what began to become evident is that tobacco consumption, especially for workers who had a long process of training their workforce, and who reached the maturity of the development of their workforce even decades later, at the age of 40-50 they were dead from heart problems caused by tobacco or lung cancer. And then, especially where this type of worker appears, [...] the state begins to act because for the general movement of capital accumulation this means losing labor power, and it means an enormous expense in recovering the labor force that is deteriorated, health expenses.

The first proposal there is is to the tobacco industry. To begin with, historically, the way to curb tobacco consumption, to regulate it, so that they do not exceed the high level necessary, is taxes. All the things that have these extraordinary taxes (the same happens with alcoholic beverages) or that have illegality, are the two ways of making a commodity more expensive that, at value, social consumption would exceed the level that capital needs. So it has to be more expensive for the solvent social need to contract. So, the first thing is that there are taxes on tobacco, and tobacco taxes are raised. And the proposal that the state makes to the tobacco company is: you win with this, but as a whole, this costs so much in terms of health: pay for it, you are the beneficiaries of producing this commodity. And there comes a point where that is not enough. Then, direct prohibition begins to appear, and the campaign that smoking is not allowed begins to appear, the restrictions that smoking is not allowed in certain places begin to be complied with... Things that didn't exist. They begin to be fulfilled, and the consumption of tobacco by a certain type of worker is enormously contracted for the older generations, and the new generations are not smokers. For another type of worker, in China, tobacco consumption is rising, which is a joy for the tobacco companies. So, one has all the time the manifestations that what is consumed is what capital needs to be consumed, because it needs a worker with certain productive attributes.

I am going to put it in another anecdotal example, even more personal. When I was a kid, in front of my parents' house, there was a guy who ran every morning, a guy who did what was later known as "aerobics". And with my brothers I said: well, there goes the crazy man who runs. Because a guy who was running down the street... nothing (unless he had a specific reason to run). I started running because I am from the generation in which aerobics began to develop strongly. Today I can no longer run, I am limited to just walking, trying to walk as light as possible, but... I come across lots of people who are running. What was happening? This is a condition for that worker to have a useful life during the time that capital requires that useful life; and that he has an image of himself, that is what serves him to personify the movement of capital, among other things, that he sees himself as a free, creative individual, who cares about himself – which is not that he does it for

capital, he does it for himself, on the contrary: it seems that he is stealing this time from capital: instead of working he is running.

And another example that exists is the forms that appear, which are the production of a certain productive attribute, but which is developed in companies that make *software* and these things, it was famous... I don't remember if Facebook or Google, which in the workplace has rest rooms, game rooms. It seems that the worker is stealing part of his labor power from capital when he goes and throws himself on the deck chair to meditate. And that's a form, it's a consumption necessary to produce a labor force, in this particular case, a creative labor force. If the individual is hit with a whip, he will never think of something creative. The whip of the individual who is watching him, looking over his shoulder to see how he moves the tool, is used for an individual who does a work of a mechanical nature, a mechanical, simple movement. The individual who does creative work needs to consume other types of use values in order to see himself with the productive attributes that capital is demanding of him.

Therefore, there is no labor consumption that is not necessary for capital. Marx gives it with a circumstantial example. He says: if for some reason you were paid above the value of labor power, that is unproductive for capital, a waste. And what governs the unity of social production and consumption in competition, both between capitals and between workers, what it will do is bring the price of labor power to its value.

JIC: Well, I see there were a lot of previous comments.

Alejandro [Chat]: We had yet to talk about the consumption of certain narcotics as a moment in the reproduction of the worker with certain attributes. For example, in cooking, stimulants of intensity in the labor process are specifically consumed, and in scientific fields a type of cannabis is usually consumed that relaxes the worker outside of work.

JIC: I don't know so much about these differentiations in consumption. There are very clear differences between cocaine consumption and crack cocaine consumption, because there is a clear differentiation in the consumer: one needs stimulation and the other needs not to think about anything. In scientific fields, it may be that cannabis consumption is done more as a relaxant. Not only as relaxing, but as... processes of images, as of free association, which is then translated into the ability to think, to link things that are beyond immediate appearance.

Alejandro [Chat]: In careers what you mention about the reproduction of free consciousness is quite evident, Juan. Moreover, competition itself, but particularly in endurance races due to its individual nature, is a small-scale replica of what is considered the ideal of competition between capitals.

JIC: It is the general production of consciousness. [...] This is universal: in general in sports, each one according to where it has more presence, but in the case of Argentina, the consumption of soccer as a spectacle is a condition to reproduce a normal labor force that has to participate in a process of collective

work. The individual who is oblivious to that, arrived at work on Monday, and if he was not aware of what happened with football on Saturday and Sunday, he has no way of interacting with others. Apart from the fact that it is a way for consciousness to be applied to something, that if there is a combative spirit it is unloaded there instead of looking at it as combative in the face of capital, and if there is a need to produce a collective identification, it is produced there. Beyond all that, it is a normal condition. An individual who does not know about football is an unsociable individual, an individual who does not watch Tinelli's program on television (this is for my generation, I clarify; I know that young people watch other things more), the next day he has nothing to talk about at work. Because that is general consumption, it is part of the conditions for the reproduction of labor power. I suppose that among the younger generations, those who do not consume Tiktok (or do not consume... I don't know if Twitter is still working or not), it leaves it out of the possibility of the link with other individuals.

Aristides: It resonates with me in some tendencies of... Well, yes, it can be left-wing in some cases, these new expressions that try to find "spaces of rupture", "situations of rupture of hegemony", I don't know, places of trench, of resistance outside of capital. That's where conscious eating comes in... It's a lot of things that are cooperative community forms as if they were being born outside of all that.

JIC: That is why, having completed Marx's development, I wanted to go precisely to a number of proposals that within Marxism refer to this. It seems that they never read this chapter. They say that since in the factory the worker is subject to capital, where he is free from capital is at home, in individual consumption, in his family life. And what Marx shows is that the whole life of the worker is life for capital. Those who argue that Marx did not write the chapter on wage labor from the point of view of the worker, come with the proposal that since that chapter is missing, now we have to talk about this, then the worker at home is free. And Marx wrote the chapter on wage labor from the point of view of the worker, which is to recognize himself in his condition as an attribute of capital. But I would like to complete it and then go and look at those proposals, because there is more than what Marx says in this, regarding what are the appearances of circulation and what is the content that is hidden when those appearances are transcended. And this is what is appearing. And it is here (if I am not mistaken, I am almost certain) that Marx is going to make a methodological observation, for me, very rich. Because it says... Well, I'm not getting ahead of myself.

We have this legal fiction. And Marx makes the clarification: when the legal fiction is not enough, capital resorts to direct violence. And here is the example (Marx puts it as "before", but it is still being raised today) of the cotton workers, who were the "*movable patrimony of the factories*",[270] he says, and who were forbidden to emigrate. There it is clear that he is not a free individual, but that he is a forced worker for the total capital of society. And then, Marx synthesizes the form of this condition of forced labor, where it is the movement of capital itself that continuously reproduces this condition: it forces the worker to sell his labor power. And then he says: it is no longer chance that puts the worker and the capitalist face

[270] Ibid., p. 486.

to face, which was what appeared when one looked at the movement of Chapter V, the capitalist process of production. It is the unity of the movement of capital that puts the worker in permanent contact with the capitalist. And he is going to sum up all this by saying: in reality the worker belongs to capital before selling himself to the capitalist. And he puts back what he had put before: his economic vassalage is realized at the same time that it is disguised by the periodic renewal of his sale, thanks to the change of his individual standards and the fluctuations in the price of labor on the market. And keep going looking at this unit.

What goes later, where it is again revealed who is the concrete subject and what the product is, what is the object of that social production, what he is going to propose is: when one started, the capitalist and the worker appeared as the individuals who gave way to the relationship. And now what we are going to have is what he says about: therefore the capitalist process of production as a whole as a process of reproduction does not only produce commodities, it does not only produce surplus value, but it produces and reproduces the same "regime of capital": on the one hand the capitalist and on the other the wage worker, both are the products of capital.

And with this we have what I wanted to raise about the chapter on simple reproduction. It is not even the accumulation of capital and it already fully shows what the content of the capitalist mode of production is. It completes the evidence of the first appearance, but what is going to appear is: the exchange of equivalents, equality, entails the exploitation of the worker by capital; freedom implies that the worker is a forced worker for the total capital of society; Property, from the point of view of capital, is based on the gratuitous appropriation of the product of the labor of others, not on the product of one's own labor as was the case with private property in the simple production of commodities; and the appearance that the worker pursues his personal interest, what the worker needs to do is to satisfy the needs of capital.

And here it was determined what the value of labor power is. Because when we start looking... I'm sorry I'm hooked, but if not, I'm going to forget it because I remembered and I forgot: when we first looked at the value of the workforce, determination didn't appear. It seemed that it depends on historical conditions, on what it costs to reproduce that labor force, but it was physical subsistence and there is a historical and moral element. Now: it was not explained what that element is. Now it has appeared that in the capitalist mode of production, the historical and moral element is not outside the movement of capital: it is the historical movement of capital that is generating workers with a certain history and consequently concerted value of labor power; and the moral element refers to the intellectual capacities that the worker has to produce, with what attributes this worker must be produced, who is not simply a living being who survives, but who has to have certain capacities: ability to do a certain intensity of work, to know how to work with particular means of production, with the machinery... and in what we continue to develop, the ability to organize, to personify the integral movement of capital (and not only within individual capital but in terms of the movement of the total capital of society itself).

We had already talked about it, since Alejandro made these references to business administrators and economists: the central difference is that one is formed to operate as an organ of individual capital, and the other to operate as an organ of the total capital of society or it is going to be an organ of an individual capital to put that individual capital in relation to the total capital of society. Do you want to raise something?

Alejandro: Regarding what you mentioned, 4... No, now with the value of labor power in terms of its historical and moral element there would be 5 appearances, and the content it contains, if we had stopped...

JIC: The appearance of the historical and moral is exteriority, but it is not the appearance of circulation. This is that if we had stopped there, it would have appeared to us that there is some factor that is alien to capital that determines the value of the labor power of the workers. Now what appears is: this is the determination of the value of labor power, which until then was placed externally. At a certain point I think I used the term to say, when one looked at absolute surplus value, [that] capital appeared as the subject, but that it was a subject that did not set its own conditions. And now what we are seeing, we have already seen in the process of the production of relative surplus value: how capital set the conditions for the materiality of the labor process. Now what we are seeing is that it is capital that provides the materiality of labor power, that produces it: it sets the duration of the day (we saw that with the increase in intensity it had to shorten it), it is the one that sets the technical conditions, it is the one that sets what are the use values that determine the value of labor power: it is a subject that sets its own conditions.

And I want to note one more thing. In accordance strictly with development as Marx has been doing, up to this point there has been no need for the working class to carry with it any potentiality to overcome the capitalist mode of production. What we have in front of us is the reproduction of capital, and all the transformations that we have been looking at are within the capitalist mode of production as an enhanced reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. And Marx, when he looks at reproduction, especially in what follows, is going to look at it as a question of proportions, and as a question of proportions there is not going to appear anything that says that the capitalist mode of production is engendering a subject that has the potentiality to overcome it. So much for this reproduction. When we put it forward by emphasizing the socialization of private labor – which Marx also talks about, but he is going to take it as a question basically of magnitudes – we look at the transformations that the worker experiences, how he is transformed into a subject that manages capital. Let's keep in mind that in the development that we are accompanying. In Marx's text, this is not stated in those terms: it is always the capitalist who manages capital.

Alejandro: It makes me wonder that if we had stopped at some earlier time, some of these appearances would remain as if they were the content itself.

JIC: Exactly. What vulgar economics does... which in this case is neoclassical economics, but it is also Marxism that does not look at this chapter, it is to stop at

an appearance, only that it does so to be critical of the capitalist mode of production. But in this sense, what vulgar economics does is the cultivation of the appearances of circulation: it is equality, it is freedom, property and personal interest. What determines the value of commodities for neoclassical economics? What each one maximizes its utility. It is free to maximize its utility. Then the equivalent has some problems, of equality, because according to some the two win, but each equalizes its marginal utility not with that of the other, but with that of one, in exchange. All the appearances of circulation appear.

Next Wednesday, if you like, we take some of those proposals that seek something that is outside the movement of capital, including this thing that in private life is where the revolutionary character is when we still talk about the working class, we look at some of that and enter the chapter of that of expanded reproduction. I told them: in enlarged reproduction there is going to be a first phase, a first step which is the simple movement with identical conditions, only on an enlarged scale, and therefore there is no production of relative surplus value, and then the production of relative surplus value enters, which is what makes evident this reproduction on an expanded scale based on the increase in the productivity of labour.

[Expressions of the Political Weakness of the Working Class: The "New Left"]

JIC: Well, is there anything we saw last time that we need to go back to? [...] It was around workers' consumption not determined as a necessity of capital, but sprouting from another side, in the sphere of family ties and bonds of friendship, it is outside the process of production that revolutionary consciousness springs or can sprout. Was that it?

Aristides: Yes. Yes, there.

JIC: I don't know if you want us to stop at that.

Iván: Who proposes that, Juan? The bonds of friendship, revolutionary consciousness? I got lost in that one, and look how I was going around so many places... That's not what I got to.

JIC: That has different aspects. It has some aspect in analytical Marxism. In the proposals of Holloway and Negri regarding... I look for the quotes. [...] Sorry, because I'm looking for it, but this comes from a lot of lines relatively... It comes from "open Marxism", which was in England. [...] Let's see if I have a quote from Williams here where he openly says that.

Iván: But there the specificity of life is completely erased, which is work. Absolutely everything is erased.

JIC: Yes. Here I have Williams; says:

> The private subject takes part in the search for interactive, cooperative, altruistic and multidimensional personal relationships in the private sphere. He sees it, the attempt to reproduce materially as a unitary person in order to overcome the antinomy experienced between the community in the alienated form of politics and the association of civil society determined by the form of value[271].

And then he continues:

> The State is the expression determined by the form of the popular will, reproducing the totality channeled by the processes of valorization and leaving a place in which critical forms of consciousness can develop as individuals and groups seek to rectify the worst antinomies of their lives in civil society [**JIC:** which is the one he relates to capital]. through political activity in and around the state.

This is one of the aspects: the condition of revolutionary subject must be sought outside the production process, in the private sphere.

There is Negri's position as well; he says, "In other words, it's a resistance that translates into love and community." Let's see if there is another one. Holloway, who says:

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[271] I do not know the references that JIC is going to make from now on to various authors.

> The crisis of the revolutionary subject is its liberation from knowledge. It is the call to not know, not to know. Think of an event anti-politics rather than an organizational policy. At best, such events are flashes against fetishism, festivals of the non-subordinate, carnivals of the oppressed, and explosions of the pleasure principle, intimations of the *nunc stans*.

Ivan: How curious to study so much to reach that conclusion!

JIC: I mentioned the other day (whose name I don't remember either) of the guy who says, taking Marx's development project, that he never wrote the chapter on wage labor, where he has to put things from the point of view of wage labor. It is as if this chapter that we went through had not existed. The image is that: that does not exist. […] And it is also in private life where you look for... Because the proposal they make is: in the factory there is alienation. So where does the individual free himself from capital? In his private life, in his personal ties. And it doesn't even occur to them... I think they directly make an effort not to read that chapter, because if they read it, you can't say that; there, precisely, the private life of the worker is treated in the process of reproduction of his job, where it is since "it is an attribute", even in that process; And it is not even the individual worker: it is the working class that is an attribute of capital.

All of these lines derive from Rubin. The starting point is always that the specificity of the capitalist mode of production is abstract labor, and abstract labor is a phenomenon of circulation. So, since development is emptied of content, they are later supported by these statements.

Ivan: But doesn't it also underlie these statements that the particular thing about the capitalist mode of production is private property and not private labor?

JIC: No, not in these guys... For them, private labor is erased. Sometimes there is mention of private property, other times there is nothing left, neither private property nor... In De Angelis's writing, he makes his argument that in order to know what value is, one must know wage labor, because abstract labor is that work that the worker does with "indifference" to its concrete form. What does "indifference to its concrete forms" mean? De Angelis says: with indifference to the life experiences of the worker, to the thought of the worker, and that this is what abstract labor is. It is an article that must be 50 pages long in a journal. There is no reference to the private nature of work, and I think there is, if I remember correctly, a mention of private property, but sideways. This is the dominant thing within Marxism.

Iván: It can also seem like such a naturalization of private labor, that it is no longer seen as specific. In other words, in the author's point of view, it might seem that the problem is exploitation, but not the private organization of work. We are all free individuals and therefore...

JIC: It's not exactly that. That is like another aspect, because those of exploitation are historically linked to the political organization of the working class: the working class has to organize itself in the face of capitalist exploitation. What they propose, in the case of Holloway and Negri, is first the denial of the

existence of the working class. In Negri and Hardt it will appear: it is the "multitude". And in Holloway, who was one who said that the content is the class struggle, and the form is the development of the modes of production, now what he comes to say is: well, if you want, call it "class", but there is a problem with calling it that, because the problem is that capital is a "being", the social relationship is reified, and the problem is "doing"; and consequently, to identify oneself as a class is to identify oneself as a part of capital. And that does not allow the "carnival of the oppressed" to be unleashed.

That is the dominant thing. I wrote, and they interviewed me that was also for a book from Peru, but for another, and I pointed out the relationship between the erasure of the materiality of abstract labor with the transformations in the materiality of work. And why does one go from the political organizations of the mass working class (whatever they were) to the negation of political organization and the denial of identification as a working class. Well, here's what it is. I don't know if they want to... I try to look for one more piece in the multiplicity of files I have, which I don't know what they were called, or what I'm going to find.

Iván: What do you have? Reading cards, Juan, there?

JIC: No, no, I have the text that I wrote at different times. I have files of documents and from there I am getting the appointments, I never had the patience and order to make cards.

Aristides: There is also a kind of reduction in the sphere of production, a simplification. As if suddenly the sphere of production were only the factories that produce commodities. And then, from that reduction, well: that is civil society and the other is outside, and that's where politics and consciousness, subjectivity come in... It is a fragmentation of development, at least of this last chapter that Marx makes, everything is fragmented. There is also situationism, which in this sense also proposes that the political subjectivity that is going to be revolutionary is going to emerge from situations of rupture of that logic of capital.

JIC: Yes, but there you can also find the link with the production process. In these others, in negation, we have to get out of the production process: we have to turn our backs on capital. What appears there is that there is a human spirit that is free by nature that rebels against this oppression.

Randy: And also, in many approaches there is a kind of split between production and reproduction. In fact, there is a book, the "split of value", [272]I don't know what. I am also thinking of Moore, who starts from a split between production and reproduction and situates, let's say, the capitalist relationship in production and reproduction; he speaks of an "appropriation" and distinguishes it from production. Production is not necessarily denied, but a split is conceived, and as if they were two logics, how these two logics are interwoven. But he thinks more of a dialectic between these two planes.

[272] It seems to be the work of this author: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roswitha_Scholz

JIC: Yes. What happens is that Moore's thing is: societies choose what they value (and then value became anything), and in capitalist society wage labor has been valued and other forms of work have been despised. It also has the same thing as Rubin: value arises in circulation. All the proposals of the negation of the working class and the small identity... It is not that there is a generic identity as a working class and then there are specific forms within that generic identity, it is the other way around: there is a multiplicity of identities, all separate, that have to converge from outside themselves, that is, they are constituted units that have to converge, that have to be associated. It is the self-image of the commodity producer.

Randy: Laclau, for example, could be. The constitution of the demands as a multiplicity, and the political articulation that would not be determined. It would imply, let's say, that constitution.

JIC: Yes. Here I found the one who... A certain Lebowitz, I think he's a Yankee. Michael Lebowitz, who says that Marx failed because he did not take into account the point of view of wage labor, conceived as the external opposite of capital; and limit himself to writing (all are terms that Lebowitz uses): the "determinist", "fatalist", "reductionist", "economist" and "subjectless"; the book *Capital* is an "absence of Marxism in Marx".

Ivan: "Absence of Marxism in Marx" you say? [Laughter.]

JIC: Yes. I wouldn't object to it so much but... [Laughs]. But well, Althusser also proposed the "non-Marxist" or "pre-Marxist" Marx. Lebowitz says that the moral historical element is not explained, and what we stopped last time was to say: this is the moral historical element. What we are seeing in the reproduction of labor power as a use value for capital, and therefore with the productive attributes that capital demands of that labor power: that is the historical and moral element.

But hey, that's universal. It's not that within Marxism... These are proposals that have absolute current validity. That is why every time I go to a conference, a congress or something to talk about value, the first thing I do is say: value is abstract labor, material expenditure of human labor power, socially necessary, materialized in commodities in a private and independent way, which is represented as the attribute of exchangeability of commodities. Because if you talk about value, you talk about abstract labor, and you don't say that, for everyone present, you are talking about a social form. Abstract labor is conceived as a purely social form.

There is one more step that is: what is the political reason for this? And that is what I aimed to answer in this interview. The political reason is that the working class, which was the bearer of a whole series of movements in which the accumulation of capital was developing, which needed relatively undifferentiated workers, which needed the scope of centralizations that were still being cut under national forms... Who is the social subject that can personify a movement of reproduction of the relatively universal labor force with increasingly developed productive attributes? The bearer of this is the political organization of the working class. When this material base is reversed and capital begins to need

strongly differentiated workers, and the centralization of capital goes beyond the reach of national spaces, the working class loses the political strength it had. Political force is not an abstraction: it springs from the movement of capital accumulation. And what does capital need? Quite the opposite: fragmenting the working class, going over national reaches. And the political organizations of the working class lose the strength they had.

The differentiation is expressed precisely in absolute fragmentation, in the small identity against the generic identity of the working class. The centralization of capital beyond national scope no longer takes the form of the centralization of capital as the property of the state, but takes the form of the development of individual capitals called multinationals. And the working class was left without political strength. And the form that political weakness is going to take, from the point of view of knowledge—which is the organization of political action—is that knowledge, which already had a whole series of characteristics before... Even in the mass political organizations there was the question that it is an abstractly free will that is going to lead us to overcome the capitalist mode of production, that we are free individuals by nature... All these things were present, but at the same time they were ideological forms of these political and mass organizations.

In my opinion, what is generically called the "new left" is the expression of that fragmentation and of this political weakness. So, what is the new left beginning to do in the theoretical field? It begins by condemning the old left because they were determinists, because they were mechanistic... And now what matters is the will: we are going to overcome everything through a revolutionary will that has nothing to do with the development of the productive forces, that has nothing to do with the way in which the process of social life is organized. To do this, it is necessary to erase the material character of abstract labor, because even now we have to speak of abstract labor, but that it is not something linked to the materiality of the process of production, of the process of human life. It has to become an ideal construct against which we must fight.

One of Holloway's discourses is that abstract labor must be fought. When Negri and Hardt talk about the crowd, there are no more social classes. Hardt and Negri talk about biopolitics, discovering that the whole process of the worker's life is a process... Now it is no longer like before, they are going to say: now the whole life of the worker is not an attribute of capital precisely, but is... Work is directly social. In these cases, the private nature of the work disappears. Biopolitics is directly social. So, who is the revolutionary subject? Those who work in advertising. Because it is communication now that is at stake. I put it in a cartoon, but that's it, they're specifically named. This is what Marx will call in the *Grundrisse*, "general intellect" (later he will speak of scientific work as general work, but we will arrive at that in Volume 3). This is what they take, and "general intellect" is this, the bonds that are established between the consumer and the... it is not the producer... But the bonds that are established are, far from being objective knowledge... Precisely, advertising is the manipulation of a free conscience whose content is to be alienated. Well, that's what's put there.

I also put it in the new edition of *Knowing Capital Today*, I took these developments to confront them. The thing about the book is that since it only arrives at what corresponds to the general social relationship in parallel with Volume 1, there is no room for all the other discussion. I hesitated whether to put the interview at the end as an appendix, and then I said: no, it's anticipating things that one can't advance. This is what it is, as they say now around here. If one looks inside Argentine Marxism, the magazine "Tool"[273] is in the line of Holloway absolutely. What remains of the people who were with Pablo Levín are absolute Rubinists. I understand that Claudio Katz is a Rubinist. Pablo Rieznik was. Then you sweep up a bunch of lines that seem to have nothing to do with each other, and it's absolutely dominant. Astarita is a Rubinista, even though he says that there is a "good part" and a "bad part" of Rubin. So, one has to go looking for it not in the minds of those who postulate these proposals, but in what happens with the materiality of the process... [...] we have to go and look for it in what happens with accumulation...

I was going to put this: Marx makes a synthesis (which I should not do at this point, but...) in the *Grundrisse*, without having yet been able to establish why this is so, where what he proposes is: there are three stages in the development of human society. The first is based on the bonds of personal dependence, part of the animal bonds and become bonds of personal dependence. The second is the link through things. The third is the conscious bond, he knows his own need. And he says: the second is the development of the third. And what is proper to the second? It is not in these terms exactly, but it says: to produce a society of universal individuals with universal needs and universal capabilities. This is the historical role of the capitalist mode of production. When one looked until the last quarter of the twentieth century – with many caveats – what appeared to be the general movement pointed in that direction. And who was the subject of the advance towards universal individuals? It was the political action of the working class. Where does universal education, the universal shortening of the working day, the centralization of capital as the property of the state come from? Of the political action of the working class. The capitalist class that remains after its centralization benefits from it, but it cannot be the bearer of this centralization because it liquidates a part of the capitalist class. But then we're going to look at it.

And a phase of accumulation appears that has the same content in the last analysis, because it is the development of the productive forces of social labor, but which has the opposite form (the one we spoke of before). And the working class loses its political strength, fragments and reaches a point where its identity disappears; Now there are small identities: let us be in solidarity among small identities. I say "small identities" in which even plants (I remembered Moore) and animals enter. But identity is a human identity, it is not simply of living beings. It is a human identity in the concrete historical form of working-class identity. But on these theoretical bases, it is impossible to organize mass political action. The possibility of making a political organization of the working class that has the character of a mass political organization disappears. And there are more massive,

[273] https://www.herramienta.com.ar/

less massive, very small movements. And these are the present forms of the capitalist mode of production. […] Iván, [...] Did you want to propose anything else?

Iván: Yes, it's something that I had pending from the previous class. […] In simple reproduction, we had seen that the capitalist, to the extent that he was consuming as revenue the surplus value he generated in production, reached a certain moment where he consumed the equivalent of the initial investment he had made. And when I read it in the text, that appeared to me in a confusing way; I don't know if it's because of how Marx puts it, but it appeared as if constant capital was being consumed, and in reality constant capital is reproducing itself in its value, in the commodity. So, the question I was asking is whether with Marx's proposal, what is becoming evident is that the social role played by the capitalist in advancing capital to start the productive cycle, he loses it to the extent that in the end everything he advanced he ends up consuming as income. In other words, is that the proposal that is there in Marx? Because in the other way, what I saw is: constant capital is finally reproducing "itself" to the extent that its own value is in the body of the commodity, and therefore it returns in order to be able to replace that constant capital.

JIC: I put it with this. What one can say is that there is a formal, not real, transformation of the capitalist's original capital into accumulated surplus value. Because precisely what appears is what you said just now, and that you said it better than I said it and than I am going to say it now, so later I will have to listen to the recording. It is: formally, the capitalist has eaten up his capital, his capital is accumulated surplus value, and he lives on surplus value. Now, if you look at it strictly, you can say: no, it was preserved... It is several things: variable capital, every time a production cycle is made, disappears and there is a new value. This new value is the product of the labor of the workers, but it is not surplus value, because it is the value of labor power. So, there one can say: well, the capitalist's original capital was replaced by the value produced by the workers. But with what did they buy the labor power of the workers? With the original capital, which now no longer exists, but since it had that original capital, it has titles to recover it; otherwise, the worker would have "stripped" the capitalist, so to speak, of his original capital.

So, for me that's it. It has a formal character, or I might say that it acts as a mechanical demonstration of why the capitalist's capital, even in simple reproduction, is accumulated surplus value. But I can't really deploy it that way because I would have the objection that someone would tell me about: it is the value of the old means of production that reappeared. And that was the capitalist's original capital. And variable capital is not accumulated surplus value, because it is not really the original value of the capitalist, but it is a value for which the capitalist pays. It was produced by another, but the capitalist buys that labor power. Yes, with the product of the worker's labor he buys the worker's own labor power, but it is the product of the worker's labor that the capitalist paid.

Why does it appear there so much...? Because not only is variable capital in place, but this reaches all capital. I could never know why Marx put things up: Marx knew; but it is possible that it is like a step in showing what follows. Because in that chapter, with that argument, the four appearances of circulation disappeared,

they showed their opposite content absolutely. Because the exploitation now is not only that through the exchange of equivalents the worker gives more and produces more value than he receives in exchange, but also, in the exchange of equivalents, he is paid with the same that produced *non-payment*. So, it is private property based not on one's own work, but on appropriating it for free, it is full exploitation because they pay it with the same as they took from it for free, and at the same time it is the absolute negation of private property based on one's own work, taken to its extreme; that the worker pursues the needs of capital, in the form that he pursues his personal interest, he has to satisfy the interest of capital; and that he is no free individual, that under the appearance that he is a free individual, he is a forced laborer for the whole of the capitals of society. Everything is round, but for me [it has] this... let us call it "weakness", that it is *formal*. Now: when it is incorporated into the east chapter of accumulation... There is no doubt that if the capitalist's original capital continues to subsist, it is a tiny, insubstantial part of the capitalist's capital. And then, even if it had been preserved, it tends to be zero within the capitalist's mass of capital. And there, then, are really the four fully developed inversions.

This "formal" and "real"... Marx does not use those terms there. Hegel does do that, and formal determination is an external determination, which has an exteriority, because the form cannot account for its own necessity. And in Hegel the point is that one always first confronts the form, then discovers the content to it, and then unfolds why the content necessarily takes the form with which one found it.

Ivan: But I say, for me too, in the extended reproduction... Yes, it's like it closes completely. But even simple reproduction for me, if he is thinking of a society in which he reproduces his means of production, his population, his existence, it is as if in that simple reproduction, for me what Marx manages to show is that what appears in circulation, which is the role of the capitalist as the one who organizes production because he can advance capital, In that same simple reproduction, what is demonstrated is that this paper is quickly exhausted by the capitalist, because everything he advances is finally consumed. And there is a moment of simple reproduction where it is simply profit on the part of the capitalist, it begins to appear as a parasite that simply consumes.

JIC: No, I don't share that one... because he has the management. Now in this chapter we are going to see that Marx continues to recognize him as the capitalist who is in charge of the private management of social production. On the contrary, it will recognize that: it has a historical right to exist, because it is the one that does the management. It does not matter if capital is accumulated surplus value, but it is not a rentier who consumes parasitically. Here what is going to appear precisely from this is: the capitalist is the one who has to divide how much surplus value he is going to consume, how much he is going to accumulate. And what's going to appear is which of the two portions is the independent variable and which is the dependent variable. I don't know whether to bring it forward. It is in the independent one that he fulfills his function as a capitalist. And here what appears is that the individual consumption of the capitalist is also determined as a need of capital. It is not that the capitalist consumes what he wants, but that he has to

crave to consume what the movement of his capital tells him he has to crave and consume.

Iván: But you, Juan, when you refer to management, is it strictly the management of the division of the income generated by capital? Because we had seen that part of the management is beginning to take care of the collective worker himself, right? At least partially.

JIC: No, but be careful, because the development we made is not in capital. It is not in the text.

Iván: In other words, that's where the control of the supervisor, of the foreman, appears. It appears as the lowest rank of that control.

JIC: That's why. But the one who exercises control is the capitalist, he is the one who is in charge of making the plan of production, it is his authority that makes the plan of production manifest. So that comes up. And now, when we see it, this too: when he has to decide what he does, it's because he has to organize production... [...] I will go ahead, but to be clear: since the independent variable is accumulation, the capitalist has to know what he is going to accumulate in, how he is going to accumulate... Consequently, that is organizing, structuring the expansion of production.

Iván: In other words, it still retains that historical role, at least until now.

JIC: Until the end of Volume 1. And expressions of that only appear in Volume 3.

Iván: And that's it today, how is it? That is constantly recreated and dissolved, isn't it? Because there are always capitalists who innovate or who have capital and develop a whole ... I don't know, for example, the references that one sees today of the capitalists are no longer Henry Ford of the automaker, but the owner of Google, Facebook, Elon Musk and others. They appear as those capitalists who still have a place, or seem to have a place in the management of their own capital. And on the other hand, the Corporations appear, that is, as capitals that would already be controlled by a collective worker.

JIC: Many of those things appear in Volume 3. But think about this: at this point, what is Musk doing? He is not looking at whether the cars are going to have their headlights on this side or that side. He's not even looking at what they're going to do with the cars. He basically plays a role of representing that capital. When he appears making the scandal that he buys Twitter, the purchase of Twitter is organized by a collective worker who has begun to carefully study what Wednesdays they are going to do with Twitter: he has no more. Let's suppose that, even if he has said: "Well, let's buy Twitter", before that, it is very likely that he has a collective worker specialized in seeing what he has to do as a representation of his capital and in what things like that, spectacular, he has to put his capital to play the role... that its capital is at stake, moreover. With one more thing: Elon Musk appears... it's the one with the electric cars, too, right?

Ivan: It has battery-powered cars, it has SpaceX, which has the mission of going to Mars and starting to colonize the Milky Way...

JIC: That's why: the main manufacturer of electric cars is not Elon Musk, it's a Chinese company that produces... The other time I was looking at the data, and it produces about ten times what Elon Musk's factory produces. So, it plays certain roles. It clearly plays political roles, and it plays the role of representing its capital. The real management of that capital... What can that individual do? He may be a brilliant individual, with the ability to be in several places at the same time and so on, but is he going to be looking at the fact that there were a lot of fake accounts on Twitter, or inventing that there were fake accounts to lower the price?

Iván: In other words, you say that because of the volume, the scale of the company, of the average capital, the individual capitalist can no longer have direct control or management of his own capital. But I say: doesn't it still retain the same more general role...? On that scale, obviously. The president of China is not going to be in all the details of Chinese political life, but he will be the one who organizes, in a general way, how capital is going to be accumulated in that country or try to manage what the most general needs are. And obviously it's going to be below...

JIC: And it makes the public representation of this national process of capital accumulation. Yes, but the management of the capitalist, which when we look at the text is an individual, it is clear that this management, that personification of capital... nothing, with the scales that capital has, no individual can integrate it into his person. And these appear... Because there was also a change with computing. In the development of computing, partly hardware, but then very strongly software and communications, they gave rise to capitals that the mythology is that they are good guys who got in the garage and invented Facebook, or Apple, Microsoft... Microsoft started financed by IBM, it pays them for the development of the OS. Then he did not have the prevention of "killing" those who had done the development [Laughter]. But this is it. It's not that Facebook is giving it a little by little... Nothing: suddenly they put in a package of funds and it expanded enormously. And there you have a collective worker who is managing.

Iván: There, would the collective worker come from the IBM side or the financier who decides whether to make that investment?

JIC: It's in Volume 3, but there's a capitalist who puts that and there's another who does the management of capital. When you look at Microsoft's, Bill Gates, the children are not in the management of the capital, and they are the owners of the capital that Bill Gates has. As far as is known, the children are not in the management of that capital. And also, most likely, just as Musk is that individual who stands out, the children are turnips. But because they have lived off the... I don't know if he has children or not, but do you understand? The heirs. Because they have not been the ones who did the development of the car. Let's assume that this original development came to this guy. Those who follow... That stuck with me, I think I said it once.

In the 1980s, the Eastman family, who owned Kodak, fired the last Eastman, who was the CEO, and hired a professional CEO who was not related. And the family kicked him out because they were going to the trash. Then they went to the trash because of the technical change, I think, but at that time it was a capital that played a big role in the process of social life. So... As it is very far away in Volume Three, I am going to allow myself to make an observation regarding this. At a certain point, Marx says, when he is talking about the separation between management and ownership of capital – in any case he puts it as the figure of a capitalist, but who is not the owner of capital – he says: capital has the same virtue that the Catholic Church had in feudal society. That was that he could take the most capable individuals from the different classes within society and put them in front. In contrast to hereditary nobility, in which the heir was an idiot, but was the heir. On the other hand, the Catholic Church overlooked them because it had the most capable individuals. Well, this happens. I don't want to take Macri's national example, but it is one of these examples of what passes from one generation to another. Although as his father told him, the day he took office as president, his father went to give him a kiss, and said in his ear: "I shit on you." But hey.

Ivan: But then, for Marx here the capitalist still plays a role...

JIC: Throughout Volume 1. At some point he is going to talk about an individual capitalist or a society of capitalists.

Iván: Are we in a position to move forward? What resistance, huh?, in psychoanalytic terms, what resistance to move forward...

Javiera: The resistance is Iván's.

Ivan: Oh, well, but it's a forward resistance, because notice that all the questions point to Volume 3 [Laughs].

Javiera: You're right, your resistance is progressive [Laughs].

JIC: Shall we start with the development of the chapter?

Chapter XXII. Transformation of surplus-value into capital

1. Capitalist production process on an enlarged scale. The substitution of the laws of property corresponding to the production of commodities into laws of capitalist appropriation.

The chapter has the expressive title of "Conversion of Surplus Value into Capital." The first thing one has to observe is that, when one looked at simple reproduction, in reality the movement of capital lacked its own raison d'être. Because capital is not set in motion to produce surplus value to satisfy the individual consumption needs of the capitalist. We had seen this when we looked at capital as a subject in Chapter IV: it was already clear that the purpose of capital's implementation of social production was not to satisfy the capitalist's individual consumption needs. And consequently, we were seeing a movement of capital which lacked the "essence" of that movement, in terms of the purpose pursued by the movement, the unity of the movement. And then Marx is going to synthesize the movement that one is facing by proposing this.

It's not textual, but when one looked at the process of production of capital, the capital that produces itself, what one discovered and confronted was how surplus value springs from capital. Now, when one looks at the process of reproduction on an expanded scale, which is where the movement of capital is fully present, with the purpose that corresponds to the movement of capital, what is going to appear is how capital springs from surplus value. And when one says that capital appeared as a subject, what is proper to a subject is to multiply itself more and more powerfully. And consequently, when we go to look at the process of reproduction on an enlarged scale with the process of capital accumulation, we have the full movement of the subject that reproduces itself more and more *intensively* and *extensively* powerful. So, we enter into this process of capital accumulation.

If when one looked at simple reproduction, the reason that gave meaning to production was to satisfy the needs of the use values of the labor power of the workers so that they would be in a position to revalue capital, and the individual consumption of the capitalist, now what is going to be present is that in the production process itself the production no longer of means of subsistence appears. but of means of production. And consequently, this reproduction on an enlarged scale is already present. At the same time, Marx does here the same thing that he always does in development: he begins with the materiality of the process and then advances on, with this social form, how that process is governed.

And then he starts with this materiality and says: already in the process of production, the part that corresponds to the production of surplus value, under the social form of the production of surplus value, already contains the necessity of this reproduction. I say "necessity" because the means of production are not suitable for individual consumption. So, the only thing that can be done with these means of production is to put them to work, the movement that follows is already marked by the materiality of the previous production process. And consequently,

what is also going to appear is that the capitalist's individual consumption process threatens what is the proper movement of capital: what we saw at the start, also now appears in the very materiality of the production process. Now: as in this materiality, thus appeared the production of means of production beyond what is necessary to replace what is consumed, part of the surplus value has the material form of means of production, and these new means of production need new labor power. And consequently, within the surplus value there must be a portion that has the material form of means of subsistence for those new workers who are going to join the labor force put into operation. And then there is this determination of the material form which must include, in the form of surplus value, the means of subsistence for the additional workers who are to be incorporated into production. What is wrong with them? How is the availability of these additional workers?

Since in this first step he is not looking at the development of the production of relative surplus value, it appears how capital secures the availability of these new workers. Because we have already seen that in the wage there is not only the consumption necessary to reproduce the labor power of the workers who are already in production, but also the value of the commodities that the future workers need to consume in order to have labor power. And so, the potentiality of this multiplication of labor power is carried in the form of the determination of wages. So, we have this movement of the need for additional working population that is subject in these absolute terms, to the fact that there is no change in the technical conditions of production.

Javiera: Juan, I have a doubt. Just before this of the additional working population, it is not clear to me when he says this that a part of the surplus-product must be transformed into capital. And well, at least my translation says: "[...] but, without performing a miracle, only those things that are usable in the labor process can be transformed into capital" (referring to the means of production and labor power). I don't understand this process in which a part of the surplus product is transformed into capital. Maybe I got tangled, what I understood was not that the surplus product is like it came in some other way to renew the process... So how is it going to create capital? I don't know if I explain myself well that I didn't understand it.

JIC: I don't know if I follow you, but when you look... Marx raises it I think several times, if I remember correctly. Expanded reproduction, what it is going to do analytically is: there is a simple reproduction. Because that expanded reproduction, especially when there is relative surplus value, no longer runs there. There is a simple reproduction, we already know how it works: the only new problem we have is the little piece that is expanded, the other one you don't even need to look at because you already know what it is like. What happens to this little bit? In order for it to be expanded, it does not have to have been part of the value of the product that comes to replace the means of production that were worn out, to the old workers who were worn out, to replace the raw material that was already consumed in the previous period. This is not part of the surplus-product, of surplus-value, that is the reappearance of value in the regeneration of the value of variable capital. The problem is simply what is going to happen to the extra bit.

So, in order for that extra bit to function as capital next time, materially it has to have the forms that serve as capital: the form of new means of production and new means of livelihood for new workers that did not exist until then. So, the surplus value *materially* has to be carried under these forms. If it does not have this shape, it cannot be accumulated. If it had the form of livelihoods for the capitalists, it cannot be accumulated. And in this situation, without technical difference, in the same proportion as the means of production are multiplied, labour power must be multiplied, and consequently in the same proportion as the production of means of production is multiplied, the production of means of subsistence for the workers must be multiplied. All this has the form of surplus product, because it is not necessary to reproduce those that were already in production. I don't know if it's clearer.

Javiera: Yes, that's when I got hooked.

JIC: Okay. We're going to have this movement on an expanded scale.

Production has to be on a *scale that is materially* expanded with respect to the previous cycle. And now, what was part of the surplus-product of the previous cycle in the form of surplus-value, in the next cycle of production is going to be converted into new capital. That new capital... it is no longer a formal problem, but it *was really* surplus value and therefore it is this product of the unpaid labor of others. Here the capitalist's original capital no longer exists, because all capital is already generated in the previous cycle in the form of surplus value. And so, the synthesis that Marx is going to make is: what the working class produces in excess of its own needs for reproduction this year, is the capital that is going to be functioning the following year: this is what is called producing capital with capital. And the whole appropriation of the unpaid product of present living labor is based on the product of previous unpaid labor. It is as if one were to say: with what do you pay the workers and with what do you put them to produce? With the product of the unpaid labor of the old workers. And so, what is going to appear is that this is the process of multiplication of capital, where the original capital is constituting an increasingly diluted part of the total capital, and the capitalist's capital is getting bigger and bigger, and the bigger his capital, the bigger his surplus value is going to be, and consequently, the more capital it will be able to accumulate.

Javiera: I don't know, maybe I'll jump, but... What we were just seeing, if the work with which the new worker is paid is based on the product of the unpaid work of the old workers, one could say that the product of the work one does is a social product, right? I know it sounds a little obvious, but I'm thinking about this thing that when you work, you can think that the product you're generating is how it belongs to you, let's say, and it actually belongs to society as a whole. It is social labor, but the product is also a social product, it is not an individual product, let's say, of the worker who is carrying out the specific task.

JIC: Let's see if I follow you. We had that work is an activity of an individual character because one has to spend one's own labor power, but whose productive forces spring from the social character of labor, where one productively consumes

the products of the labor of other individuals and develops one's labor power on the basis of the labor of other individuals. That work that other individuals do so that another has a labor force, that is social labor. But I have the impression that you were going something further. When we talked about consumption we said that consumption is individual, even productive consumption, but at the same time one consumes the means of production produced by others. Do you mean the social character of the product in the sense that individual A produces something that is not going to be consumed by himself, but by individual B? In that sense do you say that work is having a social character or were you...?

Javiera: [...] When you said it and read it in *Capital*, it came to me when one comes across all this "common commodities" thing, about what human beings produce and what nature produces in general... Well, to contrast this that there is something outside of capital, linking it to the issue we were dealing with before, and those who defend these proposals, this perspective, say: there is a product that generates a community, and that product belongs to the community, it is something that produces someone else, outside capital. But that's not the point of what I was thinking, it's like there's an appearance that what you produce or what you consume is the result of the work you performed. And in reality what is behind, that is, what one produces in the end is not... I got tangled, I'll leave it for when I can state it more clearly. I still told you that it was a jump because I also grabbed it from something I read in Volume 3.

JIC: That's sin! [Laughs]

Javiera: No, I know...

JIC: But read it, read it anyway.

Javiera: [Laughs] No, no, if I said "I know", to put it without showing it. It is based on the discussion that the land belongs to no one and that the work that one also produces... It has been a leap. It's very abstract.

JIC: That the land belongs to no one... In the capitalist mode of production, land has an owner, it is monopolized. The proposition that the earth belongs to no one abstracts from the social form that the human life process has in its unity.

Javiera: Yes, but it's nobody's in the sense that it's not a result of human work, let's say.

JIC: So the thing is that it is not the product of human labor, not that it is nobody's. Where are you aiming with that?

Javiera: I had written it down. I will ask the better question: is the worker the owner of the fruits of his labor? Because when I look at what I told you at the beginning, there are like the old workers, and finally... That the new workers are being paid with the fruits of the unpaid labor of the old workers. So there I wondered in what sense the worker is the owner of the fruits of his labor. If the

fruits of his labor are not his property, but a "social property" or something like that.

JIC: Let's see if I understood you. The worker is not the owner of the product of his labor, of *anything* of the product of his labor. The product of his labor necessary to reproduce himself is confronted as an alien property that belongs to capital, the product is "immediately" confronted with the same worker who produced that product as someone else's property. To the new worker, since he has not yet worked, there is no product of his own labor. But a part of the product of the old workers which exceeded what was necessary to reproduce the old workers, because for that reason the surplus product, also confronts the new workers as the property of the capitalist.

In the chapter that follows, if I'm not mistaken, this will appear. This is what Marx has been saying about capital leaving the workers in charge of their own reproduction; Capital does not need to concern itself with this (put in very general terms) because the worker is confronted with his own conditions of life with property that is alien, and then, if he wants to reproduce his life, he has to put that labor power that he produced at the disposal of... It has to buy the commodities, their livelihoods. He bought his means of subsistence, reproduced his labour-power, and in order to regain the means of subsistence he can only do is to sell his labour-power again. These means of life are once again confronted as the property of the capitalist. And if he did not sell the labor power to the capitalist, he cannot access his own means of living. I don't know if...

Aristides: Can I add a little thing? What begins to appear in the previous chapter is already that, on the one hand, it is already beyond a single cycle, in relation to the accumulation of capital, there is even the figure there of the spiral. At the same time, he also said that the question is no longer a capitalist vis-à-vis his workers, but the set of capitalists vis-à-vis the workers. And on the other hand there is this thing of workers not only individually and collectively (the collective worker), but it is from generation to generation. There appears the question of knowledge and material attributes, of qualification, of the moral element... as if it is transmitted from generation to generation of workers. So there it appears as a "social capital"... The working class as the variable part of capital, and there as if this variable part, in this transmission from generation to generation, took on a meaning, a little more content appears... of labor power as part of capital, in the sense that when you put the cases of white America...

JIC: The cotton workers.

Aristides: Of course, and the bosses said that if they let them go, their capital is devalued. So, I need knowledge and all this to be transmitted from generation to generation. That's where I could see the moral element as put even more simply in the previous chapters.

JIC: All the consumption of the workers is consumption for capital. And the value of labour power can include those use values which, in the very history of the exploitation of that labour power, have been necessary to valorise and accumulate

that capital. So, if there are certain productive attributes that have been developed and capital continues to need them, the use values that correspond to the production of those attributes must be included in the consumption of the working population. But I don't know if that's what you wanted to propose, Aristides.

It must be considered that in all this the unity of the movement is developing more and more. That's why I thought, Javiera, that you were aiming for this. Where in enlarged reproduction (it is implicit in the simple one), what remains in this expression that the surplus product, that a part of the product of this cycle/year, has to have the material form that is necessary to expand production in the next cycle. What is developing and what is appearing is: now, what is seen is that no matter how chaotic capitalist production may be—because it has no direct regulation—it has as a condition of its movement that the use-values be materially produced—be they means of subsistence or means of production—that are needed to expand production in the next cycle. When you look at it you say: well, surplus value was produced, surplus value became new capital that was set in motion and produced more surplus value, etc. And it's not that it just happens that way. Materially it must have been produced, there must be a unity in social production.

It is a private production. But what is becoming clear is that, if when we look at Chapter IV, in the cycle of capital what appeared is that there must be these commodities, these material means of production, and there must be this labor force with material productive capacities, now what is appearing is that the reproduction of the movement has as a condition that the capitalist has produced the additional means of production that he is going to Capitalist B needs circulation, and B must in turn have produced the means of subsistence which are to be consumed by the new workers of capital Z. And then what appears there is a material intertwining of social production. Where the movement of reproduction is not simply the movement of an individual capital, it is the movement of the total capital of society, which has this character of having the material forms which serve for expansion in the next cycle. And it is not an abstractly individual problem, but it is a social problem, of the total capital of society. That the total capital of society up to now has no way of saying: "We need to produce this, don't stop producing that, because to open the next cycle you have to produce this." And that leads us to a problem that I will raise later. But we had been seeing a contradiction in the movement of capital, which was the socialization of private labor. What is developing now is another contradiction.

We saw that individual capitals act as independent subjects, indifferent to each other. But when we looked at the question of this, whether it be the length of the working day, or the availability of labour power – having it always available, and therefore it has to be superfluous – we saw that the subject of the process of valorisation is not simply individual capital, but the total capital of society. This was a problem, a contradictory need for the total capital of society that individual capitalists could not satisfy. What we are seeing with this reproduction is that now it has appeared to us that *materially* individual capitals depend on each other in the sense that if capital A did not produce what capital needed, now capital cannot function again. And consequently, the contradiction that we had, which was who the subject is, the subject is the total capital of society, but the total capital of

society has no movement except through the movement of individual capitals. How are individual capitals recognized as organs of the total capital of the company? How does this capitalist know that in reality his capital is effectively functioning as an individual organ of the unity of the total capital of society? If each capital moves chaotically, there is no "indicator" that allows an individual capital to recognize itself as an organ of the total capital of society in its process of valorization and reproduction.

Javiera: The state, right?

JIC: Well, but it's outside the movement of individual capital. Because the state can put *conditions* on the movement of individual capital, but it cannot tell you whether you have to produce more or less, whether you have to use this technique or not, because if the state could govern all that, then you would have, *at least in production*, a direct regulation, which would not have unity with *consumption*, but that could have the unit set in the production process. Then this contradiction appears: the subject is the total capital of society, but its movement is carried out in that of individual capitals. How do individual capitals work? Up to this point it is *as if* total capital were "imprisoned" by the whims of individual capitals, and this is another contradiction that will be developed from now on and throughout Volume 1.

Iván: Isn't there a first answer in the chapter on "Machinery and large industry"? Because Marx when he develops machinery as the most powerful form of relative surplus value, what he proposes is that capitals... let us suppose that they consume the final commodities for consumption, and that they revolutionize the productive techniques, expand the scale of production, and in expanding it increase the demand for the raw materials, the intermediate means of production necessary for the production of that commodity. And therefore, it requires that the "intermediate" phases or the forms of production of private capital that create the commodities that are the means of production and so on of that final productive process be revolutionized. And if we add that to what we had seen in Chapter III, what we would see is that when capital increases the productive scale and creates more commodities, it would generate an expanded demand for the intermediate commodities that it requires for its production process. And if they are not yet produced on a sufficient scale, their price would increase, and as the price of these commodities increased, there would be greater capital investment, or there would be more capital that would participate in that branch to approach the solvent social demand.

JIC: I return to this: and how is an individual capital recognized as an organ of the total capital of society if each individual capital is valued according to the surplus value that it can extract from its workers? So, we have a subject who does not put the unity of his own movement.

Javiera: But isn't the state the representative of these individual capitals?

JIC: But the state can operate not within the production processes. It acts by governing the unity of this process of production, but it is not the carrier... I'm

going to put it like this: here is a living subject that has organs that are completely uncoordinated, that have no unity in their movement. It would be like an organic body, an organic whole in which each part of the body does something; Once he does something, he knows if he did what he had to do or not, either because the State reminds him of it, or because there is a movement in prices. But the coming cycle, *so many* of these commodities, of these means of production, are needed. And there is nothing to rule that in reality this amount of these means of production are going to be produced. So here there is an indirect unity that lacks the "expression" of the unity of its regulation. It is a subject, the total capital of society, which is "imprisoned" by the chaotic movement of its organs.

Iván: Put in the terms that you put it, it is to go back to chapter I and face the problem that the... Javiera laughs and generates insecurities in me, but... [Laughs]. No, lie. I say: it is to return to chapter I and see the contradiction of a social metabolism that is carried out indirectly.

JIC: The unity of that process.

Iván: Already now seeing the different capitals, seeing that process much more developed. In other words, unity is generated... as if taking chapter III again, but another part, from multiple...

JIC: It is generated by continuing with Volume 2 and continuing with Volume 3 [Laughter], there is the generation of the unit.

Aristides: But there's the rate of profit, isn't it?

JIC: What do I know, that's Volume 3, so I don't know [laughs].

Javiera: Anyway, hadn't we said that it was an automatic subject? I say: the formation of the rate of profit comes later, but what is the basis is that it is an indirect relationship and that it is an automatic subject.

JIC: But so far we have the problem that it is an automatic subject that has organs, and there is no unity in the movement of the organs.

Javiera: Yes, the same... I just want to leave this raised. Because I thought that in chapter VIII this was solved with the appearance of the state regulating these individual capitals, that if it were not for the need for total social capital, they would do anything with labor power, right? And now I kind of listen to you and I don't understand deep down what is resolved there, when the state enters, in chapter VIII, what is resolved is the regulation of the value of labor power?

JIC: When the state acts, it is expressing the unity of the movement in the terrain in which it acts, but what we have is that within the organs... Perhaps I was enthusiastic and raised it prematurely, but then we will see the contradiction that we have in front of us: it is a unity whose individual organs have no expression of unity in themselves. But let's leave it there and see you next Wednesday.

[II]

[The unity of development] [I]

We had started with the extended reproduction. In what we had looked at the process of production of surplus value, basically what we had was how surplus value springs from capital. And now, when we look at this process of reproduction on an enlarged scale, no longer formally, but *really*, what we have in front of us is how capital springs from surplus value, engenders itself on the basis of being the product of the labor of others. And the axes that we had seen basically were the appearances of circulation, which we had already begun to see when we looked at simple reproduction, and here what we have is the fullness of the appearance that private property prevails in the purchase and sale of labor power, and that what comes from the production of commodities is based on labor itself. And here from the outset we saw capital sprouting as a product of the unpaid labor of the workers, how the new workers are bought their labor power in the process of accumulation with the surplus value that was extracted free of charge from the old workers in the previous cycle. And how, then, beyond the capital that could have originated from the capitalist, which we had formally seen being consumed in the individual consumption of the capitalist, how all that original capital is becoming a smaller and smaller magnitude in relation to the capital that is accumulating through the transformation of surplus value into new capital. And I don't know if we had made much more progress. I think we started by closing some of the simple reproduction, because what follows we had not seen it seems to me.

Aristides: In my opinion, we did not end with 1, so it is in the text.

JIC: We had left it there, because what came next was precisely a central question regarding the method, and it is like a synthesis of why the development with which we got here has the form it has.

Ivan: How do we understand the character of the doubly free worker now that we see that the worker is the property of capital?

JIC: It's still doubly free. The development that follows has to do with that, but the determination as doubly free, what we see is that to be doubly free was to be alienated in capital. Now we see that this alienation takes the concrete form of being an attribute of capital in the whole development of its life, and that it belongs to that capital as an individual who is free.

The worker has to take care of his own reproduction, it seems that he does it for his own interest because it is the way to reproduce his life, and he does it by having to reproduce himself with the attributes that capital demands of his labor power. And it appeared that the worker is always obliged to this through his freedom, because in his freedom he sold his commodity, and now the conditions of reproduction of his life confront him as commodities that do not belong to him. And as a free individual, he goes and buys those commodities, he cannot do anything else. But that is not the relationship of the slave to the master or of the

servant to the master, it is the relationship of the worker to capital, not to the capitalist, it is not a personal link to the capitalist. And as soon as the worker consumes those commodities that he bought, the fact that he has acted as a free individual who bought the commodities and now appropriates the use value, which is proper to the free individual, of those commodities that are his, is what puts him in the need to sell his labor power again. So, what is appearing is that movement, it is not that it disappeared. We are now facing a process in which what we saw when we started from the relationship between commodity owners, then between capitalist and worker as one possessor of money and the other as possessors of commodities, but as possessors of commodities, is still the form that this movement takes. What we are discovering is that the content is the opposite of that form.

What Marx is proposing precisely... I think that is what we had not seen, because it makes reference to this: the form of appropriation is still private property, and yet its content is completely different, it is the opposite of what initially appeared and of what appropriation itself is. Because there is still an exchange of equivalents, but what capital delivers as an equivalent is the product of what it previously wrested from the worker without equivalent. The point is: it's not when you look at an individual worker, it's when you look at the working class, you look at the capitalist class, you're looking at the total capital of society. Because capital did not take anything out of the worker who has just joined production for the first time, because it has not yet extracted surplus value from him, but if one looks at it as a class, the old workers, that is, it is the product of the unpaid labor of the working class with which the labor power of the working class is bought. And then, there is a change of equivalents that entails that more work is given than is received in exchange.

It is here that Marx first makes the observation that it seemed that the right of property sprang from labor itself, because he does not make it explicit when he looks at the appearances of circulation; He mentions private property, and one can go back to the previous course and say: where does private property come from? It was the condition for having full control over one's own individual work, and then it springs from private labor, and the only private labor one knows is one's own work. Well, and now it seems with this development. And Marx is going to synthesize this by saying that if at the beginning it seemed that there was an identity between labor and property, now what is evident is that there is a divorce between property and labor. I make a clarification, that is always from the point of view of the capitalist, the private property of the worker over his own labor power is a private property that is based on his own labor, but for capital private property was absolutely invested. Is this clear?

Ivan: Yes, it seems that it is becoming clear that it is alienated both in its commodity and in the social relation, in the total capital of society, or that because it is alienated in the total capital of society, the most concrete form is that it is alienated in its commodity labor power.

JIC: Yes, here it is no longer simply alienated in its commodity. What has appeared in the development since Chapter IV is that both capitalist and worker

are alienated in capital, they are attributes of capital. One can say: but it is no longer an alienation in the commodity. I put it like this: when we looked at the commodity producer, he was a free individual who had private ownership over his own means of production, who consequently had full control over his individual labor; he had no control over the social character of his labor, and therefore he had to submit his consciousness and will as a free individual to the domination of the social powers that the product of his labor has. The product of his labor is commodities, what he knows he has to produce is value.

If we look now at the commodity producer... And I'm going to take it as it is in Marx's development, I'm not going to say that he also organizes his own work with a scientific conscience or anything, but he's no longer an individual: he's a collective individual made up of doubly free individuals who don't have private property over their own means of production. that they only have their labor power to sell, and that consequently enter the production process as a collective that does not have full control over their collectively individual labor, because that part of that control is held by the capitalist. Yes, each one has some control over his purely individual work. But at the same time, he who has full control over this collectively individual labour has no control over the general social character of that labour, and consequently puts the labour power of this collective worker at the service of the social powers of the product of his labour. What that collective worker has to produce is no longer value, they are no longer commodities, what they have to produce is capital, and capital is accumulated surplus value. This is the development of the alienation of the worker as an attribute of capital. I made some horse changes in the middle of the river that are not advisable, but hey. It must have come to me because of the day of Perón's return to Argentina, the anniversary. Is it?

Ivan: With this last answer I got a little lost actually. That is, but do you then say that he would not be alienated in his commodity? When I said "commodity" I said "commodity labor power."

JIC: He is no longer *simply* alienated in his commodity, he is alienated in capital. Because he is subject to the domination over his person who has the product of his labor, and the product of his labor is not simply his labor power, it is capital. One can say that with the product of his labor he replaced the value of his labor power, but that does not make the essence of capital, but that it produces surplus value. So, it is alienated in capital. In the capitalist mode of production, all individuals are alienated in capital, we are an attribute of this general social relation. The capitalist as the personification of capital, the worker as the personification of labor power *for capital*, which belongs to capital – to borrow the expression that appears in Marx's development where the workers are not the organizers of the labor process.

Iván: But here too, there is a change in how we can conceive of freedom. We had seen that freedom, or our form of consciousness, was the product of our alienation in the commodity. And so what we would see now is that our form of consciousness is the product of alienation from capital, that is, this general social relation which is based, as the simplest element, as the simplest determination, on

commodity production and private labour. But here there would also be a leap in that aspect.

JIC: Yes, the alienation is in the capital. Now comes the explanation of why development is done as it is.

[...][274] Aristides, did you want to raise something?

Aristides: So, with this new deployment, the doubly free character of the worker remains, but what vanishes then is the character of the capitalist or of the capitalist class. The fact that the appearance of circulation, where equivalents are exchanged as products of labor, which does not really exist here, because capital needs to start from the appropriation of the non-equivalent, which is what builds surplus value. So, that property over that non-equivalent is what capital needs to accumulate, that is the part that vanishes, it remains as if in evidence that it is based on the labor of others.

JIC: It is evident if one does all the deployment, but in the movement of circulation the appearance continues to govern because the form is a change of equivalents. Precisely, what follows in the development that Marx is going to propose is: well, this seems to violate all the conditions that one saw of the exchange of commodities, the four appearances that contain the content that is the opposite of what is presented as it is presented. And it seems to rape... He is going to put in particular the change of equivalents, it continues to have that opposite content to what it seemed, it is the one that continues to manifest itself under the appearances that we saw before. It is not that this contradicts the laws of the road. None of these inverted contents contradict the laws of the road. Into circulation, the worker and the capitalist go as private owners, pursue their personal interest, exchange equivalents — because the worker sells the labor power for its value and the capitalist pays it for its value — and each pursues his personal interest.

Precisely what Marx stresses all the time is that capital does not have to deal with making the worker a forced laborer. It is the worker with his individual consumption who permanently reproduces himself as a forced laborer. Now: the worker cannot stop consuming individually, it is not that the worker for pleasure becomes a forced laborer, it is because it is the condition for the reproduction of his life process. So, what one has is: content is the opposite of form, but that content has that form. It is not an adulteration of the relation, which the capitalist is deceiving the worker by doing, it is not a falsification: it is the necessary form of the relation. Just when he makes this first observation about the appearances in the circulation of the buying and selling of labor power, he says that it is where the ideologues of capital go to look for the explanation of what the relationship between worker and capitalist is. And what he is proposing here is: of course, if you look at it in the traffic, it seems that it was this. When you advance in production and then in reproduction, what you discover is that it is the opposite of what it seemed. But that's the way it is, it's not a "degeneration" of the form. And that is why he is going to give the explanation of the reason for all the development

[274] They cut due to a technical problem and re-record at this time.

that he has been doing so far, which repeats something that we had also seen in the chapter on simple reproduction when he faced the same question.

What is going to be asked is: if this is the content, why don't we start here? Everything would have been clear from the outset if we started here. And the answer that is given is: to discover this, one does not have to look at a capitalist and a worker, one has to look at the capitalist class and the working class, that is: one has to look at the unity of the process of social life. But to start by looking at the unity of this process would be to start in a way that is completely alien to the form of the capitalist mode of production, the production of commodities. Because commodities are not the product of the working class and the capitalist class, and when one looks at the commodity, it is first and foremost the product of individual labors. And what he sees when he looks at the commodity is that what they are confronted with is not classes, but mutually independent individuals, and they confront each other as buyers and sellers. That the relationship they have ends at the moment the contract of sale is concluded, and that the renewal of that contract of sale is each time a new act that has nothing to do with the previous act. And so, what he is saying is that if one says that one is going to look at this content in unity, instead of having started with the simplest determination presented by the capitalist mode of production, it would have been to start the other way around. And there he says it directly:

> If we wish to analyse commodity production or any phenomenon which forms a part of it in accordance with its own economic laws, we must examine each act of exchange in itself, apart from any connection with that which precedes it and with that which follows it. And since both purchases and sales are always made between certain individuals, it is not possible to look for relations between whole social classes in them[275].

So, there are several things from the point of view of the method. Because the first thing is that if I am asking myself about this social relationship, I have to start with the immediate form that this social relationship presents. Because if not, I have to start making abstractions in that immediate way, and what I'm going to do is stop at appearances. I'm going to convert to concrete forms... Classes are concrete forms of that simpler social relation, they spring from that simpler social relation. If I separate them from the content they have as commodity relations, and therefore I start by asking myself about classes, trying to answer myself about classes, not asking myself, and I did not answer myself about what the commodity is, I will have converted these concrete forms into abstractions. The second thing that is clear from the methodological point of view is that, if at the beginning, when we started, the starting point seemed arbitrary, now what we see is how the development itself shows the need for the starting point. And the third issue that I would like to emphasize in this is something that we have already seen in a logical representation. If, when one advances on more concrete forms, one does so by raising simplifying assumptions and what one had found in the abstract form is not verified for the concrete form, there is a contradiction, which makes the abstract form that was discovered, or the trivial one, false. And here what we find is that, of course, the concrete form is the opposite of the simplest form. It is the opposite of

[275] Marx, K. (1977: 494), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

what we saw in the form of commodity exchange. So, far from showing us that what was at the starting point is false, what it showed us is that it is the simplest determination of this whole concrete form that seems the opposite of the simplest form.

So, for me, from the point of view of the method, this part is a very rich expression of how we are advancing, which is not raising simplifying assumptions but what we are doing is discovering a form that contains potentials to be realized, and what we are doing is deploying those powers with thought. And since what we are accompanying, those powers, are the real powers that were unfolding these simplest forms, what we are doing is reproducing in thought the real concrete.

Ivan: I don't have much more to say, but it seems incredible to me that Marx had the ability to make abstraction, to be able to focus on a point, I don't know, the commodity and all the powers that he can find in that, abstracting it in that analysis of the set of relations, and then encompassing it in the unfolding that he is making. I think it's impressive.

JIC: Marx would surely have told you: "I don't make abstractions, this is analysis." The other way of analyzing, that of separating what is repeated from what is not repeated, of that he says: it is not analysis, that is abstraction.

Ivan: What would it be like? Because I abstractions use it as...

JIC: And he also uses abstract form, concrete form... he also uses it. But when in the *Poverty of Philosophy* he makes reference to the analysis that corresponds to a representation, and he does so... I don't remember, but: there is part of the body, and the figure remains of the body, and of the figure remains the line and of the line remains the point; And he says: that is not analysis, that is abstraction. And he compares it to the things that Proudhon does. That is why for me it is important to start the workshop as we started it.

The first meeting, we looked at the social classes, the first thing we looked at was that, asking ourselves: well, but then we have a proposal of an antagonistic class relationship. And why is it antagonistic? By the distribution of income. But what is income? And income is salary and profit. But why is it profit? How are we going to answer each other? And emphasizing this: one could interrupt development there and be satisfied and say that I already know what I have to do, or why it is the class struggle, because there is an antagonistic relationship because of the distribution of income, I know what this is. Or to continue asking oneself about the need for what one found, from what need this thing that one has in front of one emerged. And that when you do that in the capitalist mode of production, wherever you start from, you will get to the commodity.

In general, what happens with the workshops of capital is that you don't make that path, but it is: well, let's start with the commodity. So, one of the things that appears is that this is an economics book. What subject is the commodity, where should it be classified? In economics. So, for me that path is fundamental. And being at this point, I am going to propose something that has to do with the method and that is very evident in Volume 3, but here one can already recognize it.

Because the exposition structure of Volume 3 is as if it were double. It is: we already know what the determination is, what we are seeing is how it is carried out; And at the same time it is: well, but whoever looks at it from here and stays here, will think this and that. Here it is implicit, when he says in chapter IV: well, that is where economists are going to look for the secret of the capitalist mode of production, in circulation; And what he is saying is that they remain in that appearance, in the appearances of circulation. But then, when you look at the whole structure of *Capital*, what you have, if you look at it the other way around, is the whole development of the process of analysis. And the last chapter that is interrupted from the drafts of Volume 3 is called "Social Classes". What is the immediate appearance of sources of income? What are social classes? They are income recipients. That is the immediate phenomenon.

Many of the proposals that appear among Marxists are: well, Marx never wrote about social classes in *Capital*, because the chapter is incomplete. But the whole structure, all the deployment that he is making in *Capital* from the commodity onwards, what he is unfolding are the determinations of social classes, he is talking about social classes.

Xatan: Before continuing, has the first question asked by Ignacio been answered? I don't know if I was recording when it was done, the one of: "The need for capital, isn't it to value value? I say this because you mentioned that it was generating surplus value."

JIC: That is valuing value. But not only that, but now what we have in front of us is also reproducing itself. The valorization of value — I say outrageously, but one could say it like this — is the "vehicle" of the purpose of capital, which is to reproduce itself on a scale enlarged to itself. Now he is present in the fullness of his condition as a subject. What it does is to produce itself, and, like every subject, multiplying itself. The problem is not simply the production of surplus value, the question is the reproduction of capital. Because now what is going to appear is how new determinations to the process of human life are emerging from the reproduction of capital, which when we looked at the simple production of surplus value, appeared insinuated, but did not appear fully developed. Is it?

Ignacio: Juan, but is reproducing capital reproducing value?

JIC: It is to produce surplus value with surplus value. Because this is how capital springs from surplus value. So the movement of capital is to produce surplus value, but capital itself springs from surplus value. What we're getting at is... I think I must have said it in these terms, I don't know, because sometimes in the workshop I hold back more, but in the courses I say it more crudely, when one finishes the section on "Absolute surplus value". And here we are not yet fully in that development, we have not yet exhausted that development. But when one finishes the section on absolute surplus value, one says: capital is the concrete subject of this process of human life alienated as the life of capital. But it is a subject that does not set its own conditions. Labor power comes with productive attributes that are not the product of capital: it comes just as capital found it. Production techniques come just as capital found them. The working day is subject to the techniques of

production, to the intensity of labor that capital encountered, and to the reproduction of labor power. But since the reproduction of labor power is not set by capital, it is in the conditions that it found it, capital is a subject that is not capable of setting its own conditions. And, besides, the starting money is not known where it came from. The workers who sell labor power are not known where they came from: they are there. These are all conditions that are placed externally on capital.

When we move forward – and it is in "relative surplus value" where the first substantial transformation takes place – what we find is that capital sets the material conditions of production, sets the intensity of work, the working day, and sets what happens to the workers. But when we got into reproduction, what happened outside of the production process... […] a production process that [...] until then we knew as the production of more value from value. What appeared to us is that, if we already knew capital as the subject of all determinations within the *production process*, now what we are seeing is that it is also the subject in the process of *reproduction*, in this that the working class is an attribute of capital even within its process of individual consumption. If in relative surplus value capital puts the techniques of production, the intensity of labor, the working day, in reproduction what we see is that capital produces labor power according to its own needs. If *this* intensity, *these* productive attributes, *this* working day were going to demand of him , he is the one who makes sure that he has those attributes.

But in addition, what appeared to us in the process of reproduction is that capital as a subject did not produce itself once and then produced itself again, but always starting from a condition that is prior to its movement: it is the starting point of its movement. Now what we have in front of us is that the starting point of its movement is the production of more value. It is not that it starts from being a value that produces more value. In reproduction, the starting point is that it is surplus value that is put to work to produce more surplus value: that is capital. It is a subject that produces itself, that sets its own conditions and that produces and reproduces human beings as its attributes.

At the end of the chapter on simple reproduction, we see that it not only produces commodities, it does not only produce capital: what it produces and reproduces is the working class and the capitalist class. So we have plenitude as a subject. And now we're going to see what else he does as a subject. To what extent is it the concrete subject of this process of human metabolism? Because up to this point it is the way to organize human life. It is inverted: the human being became the object of this subject. What we are going to see in what follows is what this inverted subject does to that object. Because up to this point he simply turns it into an instrument of self-reproduction, at the expense of all the things we have been seeing (the mutilation of the worker, etc.). But there is still more to be done than what it does, where it is fully evident that the inversion is absolute, that the process of life of this social relation implies the negation of the process of life of a part of human beings, of a part of the working class.

Ivan: Marx in chapter III states that the limit to the working day is the product of machinery. But of course, when one faces that, one could understand it as that in

reality Marx in that chapter is also presenting that, with machinery, capital makes a real subsumption of the working class and of the productive processes, and that machinery would be the form, but in reality the content is that what is limiting the working day is the very need of capital to preserve the productive attributes of the worker, product of the fact that machinery allows the intensification of work, and passes the control of the labor process and the rhythms of work and so on to management or capital.

JIC: Yes, to machinery.

Ivan: Well, but the machinery is controlled by... Although machinery already establishes in itself a rhythm imposed by capital.

JIC: Yes, yes, it is. But it is still necessary to know what happens to the worker when he goes home. You look and say: of course, since it ends there, the only thing you can do is start over. And each beginning appears as a beginning from scratch. Now what appears is a continuous movement where this subject that is capital engenders itself. That is why the reference to primitive accumulation, the original capital of the capitalist, appeared, because that, the starting point, is the only thing that remained external: everything else is the movement of this subject multiplying itself. Later, when we arrive, we will look at it. Is there anything else you want to raise? Are we still moving forward?

Aristides: I think that the second point you made in the question of method was the reasons why we started from the commodity or from the mercantile exchange. So, the expressions of consciousness would remain with what we have seen so far, let's say. Beyond the fact that, as you said, we are now advancing the deployments and we are finding the content of these forms, the consciousness for the working class, for individual and collective subjects is in the same place. We live in a society of individual freedoms and, let's say... that is the way that not only individuals, but all political economy, liberal thought, etc., are confronted.

JIC: Yes, they stay with the appearances of circulation. And one can take the proposals that appear to be critical of these appearances of circulation: if they do not advance on these contents, then what appears is that any movement that overcomes these determinations has to spring from outside the movement of capital itself. And then it appears that the working class has to have a free consciousness that produces itself outside the process in which it reproduces its labor power, the process in which production operates. And this is what appears in critical political economy, the images that there has to be something that is external to capital, and if not, this can only be reproduced indefinitely; and the worker has another consciousness besides consciousness as an attribute of capital, it is not an attribute of capital, let's say. But it is the proposal that is against it.

Aristides: So, the question of exploitation here, in critical political economy or in some Marxist perspectives as well, that emphasis that at some point, you said, goes through there, has to do with this, with putting the axis on the irrational question, or only taking when capital exploits the working class in terms of altering that "equality," that is, when he is paid well below his value, or when he works many

works or when... They tend to put it in that place and not in this place... capital is based on the ownership of the labor of others. Could it be that?

JIC: No, because they see it as an appropriation of the product of other people's labor. There are those who do nothing, but there are those who do, they are going to say: the worker is exploited because he gives more work than he receives in return, and this is unfair. What Marx is putting into the development is: the buying and selling of labor power is the expression of what is just from the point of view of the process of circulation, and the content it has is the opposite of what appears. And indeed, the worker is exploited by capital on this basis. Now: in what we have been looking at so far, what we have is that consciousness, the personal attributes of the worker – as a class, moreover – are a product of capital. And therefore, if the working class carries any potentiality to overcome the capitalist mode of production, it can only carry it as a product of capital. This power must spring from the movement of capital itself, because up to this point all the determinations of the working class have been deployed as an attribute of capital. What they do at that point is to say: no, if capital determines everything, then there can be no action of transformation.

So, then there are different aspects; One is: No, but if the worker is a free individual, and as a free individual, he asserts himself in his freedom by confronting exploitation; if he does it with enough conviction and enthusiasm, he will surpass capital. The freedom of the worker is seen in these proposals as external to capital, as alien to capital, and what we are looking at is that the freedom of the worker is an attribute of capital, it is capital that makes him free. This is one of the aspects. Another aspect is directly this: it is in "human nature" to resist being exploited, but exploitation is not the extraction of surplus value or the equivalent payment, nothing, exploitation is the history of humanity, and the history of the exploitation of the labor of others. So, the history of humanity, if we are going to call different strata of historical development "classes", is the class struggle, and capitalism is a form of class struggle. This is Holloway's old position; then it is directly that we do not have to recognize ourselves as a class... what we saw last time. And then there are multiple... So it is a problem of "income distribution", it is in the "human spirit"... That is the type of approach that appears strongly within Marxism. I don't know if it's more or less clear what you're proposing, Aristides.

Aristides: Yes, yes, that's where he closed me. The episode is also very good.

JIC: That is why it is a very rich chapter, beyond the content itself, because of what it says about the way it is developing, the deployment it is doing, why it is following the course it is following. Then there are the others, who say that *Capital* must be read in Chapter IV, those who say that we must begin with the chapter on primitive accumulation...

Aristides: Of course, where you skip that development you destroy everything, because it necessarily happens to you that when you misunderstand, something is going to be limp for you, let's say.

JIC: You're going to have started by stopping at an appearance. And one has to ask oneself what is the political necessity of the proposals that invert and skip parts of development, what ideological necessity is carried under those forms. Ignacio, I don't know if you wanted to raise something.

Ignacio: Yes, but it was something else, because you just mentioned the history of humanity as a class struggle and I came to make a comment or question about it. Do you remember when we made the criticism of the phrase this? That the other day I was reading Akal's translation, which said that the "propelling force" was the class struggle.

JIC: The translation of Akal, but of what, of the *Manifesto*?

Ignacio: No, it was a note that Marx makes. It was the same phrase, but the translation was that it was not the engine, but the "propulsive force", which would be different, because the force, where does it come from? It is different from saying that it is the engine directly.

JIC: Tell me where it is, because I lost the reference and I always looked for it... […] Look for it and pass it on to me later, don't worry.

[…] Well, is there anything else or do we move on? We have already seen the whole axis, but what it unfolds is that, if one looks at each act of exchange separately, the laws of commodity exchange are respected. And yet, the form of appropriation of social wealth is absolutely inverted. Well, and that therefore, the ability to accumulate wealth that appeared to spring from one's own work actually springs from being able to have the necessary means to repeatedly appropriate the product of the unpaid labor of others.

What will continue as an axis is, now, the full deployment of the need for the starting point, set by development itself. When did this result that we were seeing arise (that wealth is not the appropriation of the product of one's own labor, the gratuitous appropriation of the product of the labor of others)? When there is wage labour, when the worker freely sells his labour power as a commodity. And now what he is going to propose is how to reverse this in the explanation of the starting point. He says: but that moment, when the worker becomes a seller of labour-power, is the moment from which commodity production acquires the general character of social production, where all social production takes the form of commodity production. And then all the product of social labour springs from this process of private labour in the capitalist form, and all that product moves through circulation. It is only on the basis of wage labour that commodity production develops.

There are two things, I will return to what I was proposing. But if we look at the starting point of the first paragraph of Volume 1, what it says is: in societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails, social wealth is presented as an immense accumulation of commodities. And *only in those societies*. And so here is the need for the starting point and the unity of development with the starting point. It is capital that set the starting point, because the "immense accumulation of commodities" is the product of capital. And that is why one started with one's own

capital as a subject, but one could not recognize it as a subject, when one started one could not know what relationship there was between capital and commodities other than that wealth was an accumulation of commodities. Now what you have in front of you is capital that you were looking at when you looked at that accumulation of commodities. But, as I said, the commodity is the simplest form. Well, you have to look at the simplest form, and as the simplest form, all you had in front of you was the fullness of social labor done privately and independently, which is sustained by private property based on one's own labor. What we later saw is the socialization of that private labor. So here is the full unity of the starting point with its development and how development grounds the starting point.

What Marx is going to propose next is a critique of the proposals that continue to appear in force (I have now been asked to participate in a discussion on market socialism). And Marx is going to make an observation here, which is the critique of the proposals that we have already seen from Owen and the anarchists. He says:

> To say that the interposition of wage-labour distorts the production of commodities is to say that the production of commodities must not take place if it does not want to be falsified.[276]

In the letter that Marx writes after being asked for his opinion on Proudhon, when Proudhon dies, he has an expression similar to this, in other words, which says: they want the bourgeois regime without the consequences of the bourgeois regime. So, they want commodity production without the consequences of commodity production, and the consequence of commodity production is the development of capital.

You will see something else here that has to do with what we have already talked about about a simple production of commodities as a general formula for the organization of social production and consumption. Whether the first section is simply to look at the commodity in its simplest determination, or whether, at the same time, what is being spoken of is a historical stage of development of social production, based on the production of commodities. Again, the argument that is very present now is that the historical character of the simple production of commodities as the origin of the capitalist mode of production, they accuse Engels of being his thing, not Marx's, despite the fact that in Volume 3 there is a verbatim phrase by Marx that says that. When one looks at it in development, it appears all the time how Marx is looking at the development of the capitalist mode of production from the historical development of the simple production of commodities. Because what he is going to propose here is that:

> While this production [JIC: commodity production] develops, in obedience to its own immanent laws, to become capitalist production, the laws of property inherent in commodity production are transformed into the laws of appropriation of capitalism."[277]

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[276] Marx, K. (1977: 495), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

[277] Ibid. And Marx concludes with the footnote in which he says: "We must therefore admire the ingenuity and subtlety of Proudhon, when he seeks to abolish capitalist property, by opposing it with the eternal laws of ownership of commodity production!"

So, here we look at the process of genesis of the capitalist mode of production as a process of development of the simple production of commodities. I also always propose, in my point of view, that beyond whether it is indeed the historical genesis of the capitalist mode of production, for me what it shows, what allows the unfolding of that starting from the commodity in its simplest form, which is the product of the work of a free individual, private owner of his means of production... what it contains is the content of the unfolding of the determinations proper to the capitalist mode of production. But it is always appropriate, especially since there is this discussion, to emphasize that Marx is putting it literally, that the development of this simple production of commodities is the historical genesis of the capitalist mode of production.

Well, there is this thing that the capitalist's original capital is vanishing, it becomes (to borrow Hegel's term) a "*magnitudo evanescens*", no longer with the transformation that one could call "formal" that one saw in simple reproduction, but it is present. But here what he is going to say is: well, the original capital vanishes, because the mass of capital is accumulated surplus value.

2. Political economy's misconception of reproduction on an expanded scale.

Then I have marked a criticism that Marx is going to make of Smith. First, to continue the critique, he has to know Smith's approach, which does not speak of "value", he speaks of "value in exchange"; and it has two different explanations for "exchange value." Actually four, but there are two that are very marked and that Smith unfolds as if he were always saying the same thing, and says completely different things, and mixes up the explanations; What happens is that, when he needs to do one part of the development, he looks at one of the explanations, and when that explanation does not serve him for the other part of the development he is going to do, he skips the other as if it were the same one with which he had started, and then he jumps back to the first one when it serves him again. But it is from these mixed, contradictory developments that Smith makes that the broad outlines of political economy, both classical and neoclassical, spring. I don't know if it makes sense for us to dwell on this, because now I see that it requires so much prior explanation that... You tell me.

[Everyone votes yes.]

I try to do it very quickly. Smith has four answers about the determination of exchange *value* that these differences have. First he says: it is the amount of labor that can be commanded, the amount of other people's labor that someone can dispose of if he has the commodity. And that refers to salaried work. But then, for Smith, that reference to wage labor has a problem. Then he will try to explain why labor is the cause of value. And what he is going to say is that work is a sacrifice of freedom and happiness that produces sorrow and fatigue, and that then the value of work is to be freed from having to do the work, it is to unload it on the other, because one can dispose of the other's work if he has the commodity or the use value. Then he has the explanation that it is the amount of labour expended in

producing use-value—because for him the commodity is the natural form of the product of labour. And it has one more explanation, which is that value in exchange is a sum of natural prices, that the natural price of labor is wages, that of capital is profit, and the natural price of the use of land is land rent.

And so, to be very synthetic, one of the explanations says: all value in exchange is the product of labor, it is determined by the quantity of labor. Therefore, all value in exchange is the product of the worker's labor. But two deductions are made from the product of the labourer's labour: the rent of the land and the profit of the capitalist. And then, the worker is left with the residue. And this is the explanation that is in Ricardo, with a mixture of the one that follows, but which is the explanation proper to the proposals that explain the valorization of capital as a deduction of the product of labor, as a problem of income distribution and not as the result of surplus labor. It is not that the worker is deprived of a part of what he has produced, but that the worker is forced to work more than is necessary to reproduce himself. This is one of the aspects of political economy: everything is the product of labor, and these two deductions are made to the worker. And it has what is referred to in the environment as the "Luchoclassist" Ricardians, because then, since it is a problem of income distribution, it is a problem of the class struggle. And I clarify that today in Argentina there is a whole line strongly convinced that the question is like this and that inflation is a consequence of the class struggle. And it is a line that, among others, has a strong presence in the central bank.

The other explanation is this sum of the three natural prices. And when he makes that development, Smith is going to explicitly say that only wages are the product of labor, profit and land rent are not. And that is the foundation that neoclassical economics is going to take: here there are three factors of production – labor, capital and land – and each one is remunerated according to what it produces. And the worker has nothing to complain about when he receives his wages, because it is the whole product of his labor, the rest is not. And Smith is going to arrive at the incoherence that in the first explanation, it is clear that a change in wages does not affect the exchange value of the commodity, because it is determined by the quantity of labor. If wages rise, as the value of the commodity is given, it must rise at the expense of profit or rent. And precisely, Ricardo cares about that later because that is his explanation of where the life of society is going: what happens with wages, with land rent... but the exchange-value of the commodity does not change.

On the other hand, when he looks at this other explanation of the sum of the three natural prices, what he says is: if the wage changes, the price of the commodity changes. Because since they are three independent elements that add up, if one changes, the sum changes. In the other case, it is a whole that is broken down into parts, and in the other explanation they are independent parts that add up to make the whole. Well, when he gives that other explanation of what the exchange value of a commodity is as a wage + profit + rent, what he says is: + what the means of production that were used cost. In this case, if we were to translate it into the terms we have come from (what determines the value of a commodity), it would be: surplus value + variable capital consumed + constant

capital consumed. The value of the means of production is constant capital, living labour + dead labour.

But then, the analysis that Smith is going to make is to say: if the price of the exchange value of bread is the rent paid by the bakery because it is occupying an area on the ground + the profit of the bakery entrepreneur + the salary of the baker, and to that must be added the exchange value of flour... Well, but what was flour at the time? The exchange value of flour was the sum of the rent of the land where the flour mill was located + the profit of the flour capitalist + the wages of the flour workers + what the wheat cost. But what was the exchange value of wheat at the time it was produced? The rent of the land where the wheat was grown, the profit of the agricultural capitalist, and the wages of the agricultural laborers. And Marx is going to use the term repeating what Smith says: "so on." So the exchange-value of the whole product is a sum of land rent + capital gain + wages. And so what Marx takes from that is that what that entails is a reduction of the value of the product to the product of value. But, turned to the product of value, as constant capital disappeared, it seems that every application of capital... the only thing left is wages, and consequently all accumulation of capital is a purchase of labor power. And this has to do with: the workers will always find a buyer for their labor power, because in reality every application of capital multiplies the consumption fund of the workers.

And so Marx makes the critique of Smith's reversal. He says: all accumulation is the transformation of surplus value – profit, for Smith there is no surplus value – into new wages, because the only investment of capital there is is in wages, and consequently, all accumulation is the multiplication of the demand for labor power. And something that marks how Marx was absolutely clear about what the development of Volume 3 was going to be, is that when he gets to this part he says: all of Smith's reasoning is based on the words "and so on...", it has no foundation, he considers the problem where the problem really begins to be solved. But what he is going to develop next is that this problem that is before us with regard to reproduction can only be seen when one looks at the unity of movement, and that unity of movement is established in circulation and exchange, in the movement between the integral parts of total production. And what he is going to say is: in §3 of the second book we are going to analyze this true unity. And then he is going to raise (this question is not raised here, it is in the reference to the second book), which he is going to develop in one of the last chapters of Volume 3, he again criticizes Adam Smith who invests the product of value as if it were the value of the product.

Well, I don't know if anything was understood about Smith's super-accelerated development. It does not make the central axis of what follows, what we are going to follow in the next one, is what happens with the consumption of the capitalist, and what happens with surplus value. That until now we knew that the individual consumption of the capitalist exhausted surplus value, is no longer so. And then we're going to face that development. Is there anything?

Ivan: There too, John, Marx criticizes Smith for thinking that the only work that generates profit... Because reinvestment in reproduction is done only by hiring productive laborers, right?

JIC: In what sense?

Iván: I read it as Marx criticizing that not only are workers who produce surplus value directly being hired, but also supervisors are being hired, I don't know... In other words, there are other expenses.

JIC: No. Because the only workers that there are for Marx in the development of Volume 1 of Capital are productive laborers. There is no other type of worker.

Iván: And hadn't the supervisors presented them as unproductive?

JIC: No. It does not deal with unproductive laborers, it does not say whether they are productive or not. He says: the figure of the foreman appears; but it remains there and does not do the development. And here, moreover, it matters for one thing. Because what we are looking at is how capital springs from surplus value that produces more surplus value, and the only thing there is to produce more surplus value is the purchase of the labor power of productive laborers. That is why all development is about productive laborers, there are no unproductive laborers. There are these references to the foreman, to some worker who may appear in supervision, but the whole development revolves around the production of surplus value, and consequently, around the work of the productive laborers and the reproduction of the productive laborers. Let us remember when in the chapter on simple reproduction he speaks of the unproductive consumption of means of subsistence by the workers insofar as they do not reproduce the labor power, and that is the labor power of productive laborers, that consumption is unproductive for capital because it does not produce labor, he says, which "enriches capital and the state." I don't remember.

Xatan: Excuse me Juan, but we did talk about unproductive laborers.

JIC: Yes, we do talk about it. We said: well, what transformations occur in the materiality of labor, in the organization of the production process when the collective worker becomes the bearer of the scientific consciousness that he organizes? And there we emphasize production, we put in circulation, coercion, which corresponds – if one takes it in the purity of each of these two jobs – to unproductive laborers. We also take it with the thing that transformation also occurs in those areas, the development of scientific awareness also occurs in those areas; and whether these workers could recognize themselves as distinct or not reciprocally from the productive laborers; and the condition of subjects bearers of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. That also in the organization of circulation... Well, if they are bearers of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production we will see for all of us later, we have it for the end (we will see when we get there). Well, see you next Wednesday.

[The unity of development] [II]

The central thing last time was this question of the unity of development that is now posed, the development itself that puts the need for the starting point, and how the appearances that we have been seeing contain a content opposed to their form, but how only by following the path we have been following could we find it. First we had encountered its form, then the development of the content, and now what we have before us is why the need for that form, how these forms are the carriers of the movement of capital. But I don't know if they want to raise something to discuss.

Javiera: Yes, Juan. I was watching the video of the last class and I have a doubt that I think has to do with something methodological, with this of forms and content. I kept thinking, because I was there rereading the part where it talks about deception, and that you also said that this is not a deception, right? Perhaps it is anchored with this of why the need for it to appear that way when the content is totally opposite. There I see that there is something of Hegel (I did not read Hegel), as that way in which the content is shown as its opposite form, I find it a bit complex. […] I kept thinking about this thing that when it comes to explaining the forms – I say this in general – one can be half a brute and say: no, this is the true content, and the form is not the opposite of the content, right? In other words: it is the form, it presents itself as its opposite form, but it takes that form for a reason, right? So, I think that suddenly one can be a bit brutish when proposing this dialectical relationship, I don't know, it is complex for me, I don't know if you can expand on that a little.

JIC: Yes, there are two things that came to mind in this. One is this observation that Marx makes in several texts; it is in *Capital*, I don't remember exactly where, if I am not mistaken, and in other texts as well, where what it says is: if the content manifested itself identical to itself, in the form, then there would be no need for scientific knowledge, science only makes sense because the content of the phenomenon is not identical to the phenomenon itself. If it were identical, one would look and you would already have the answer of what the content is. Now: Hegel, when he makes his developments, has the structure of confronting each other in a process that is actually inverted, because for him it is the unfolding of determination, but since it is in turn the engendering of determination by thought, he puts this. There is a first step that is—I put it in these terms that are not necessarily so—the formal determination, the first thing I face is the form. And from my thought this form springs up as something external, which is self-posed. But when I begin to look at that form, to advance in asking myself about the foundation of the form, what the form puts in front of me is the content. So I no longer have a formal foundation, now I have the content substantiated. And the third step of development is: now what I have to unfold is why that content necessarily has the form that it had.

If one looks at the development of *Capital*, it is not that I have the formal explanation and now I have the explanation with the content, but the structure of the development is: I always face the concrete that I have in front of me because of its form, and now what I have to do is analyze it to discover the content. And once I

have discovered the content, I now have to unfold the need for that content in its form—which Marx is going to use the term a lot: in its *necessary* form—in order to have completed the knowledge of that concrete that I had in front of me. Where the expression often appears – Marx himself uses it sometimes – "the mere form", and it is not the "mere" form: it is the form in which the content exists. The term that empties the form of its necessity: this is how the content exists, it is not that the content exists here and the form exists here, the only mode of existence that the content has is its form. When we looked at him about the method, he used the example of thought and words. Words are not the mere form of content, of thought: words are the form of objectified thought. Even words are the form that thought has even when it is not objectified: when one is writing, one thinks in words. When one thinks, one has a thought that is not abstract because of its content: it is abstract because of its form. [...]

So, the form is the form of existence of the content. One sees it very clearly everywhere, but when you go about it in chapter I and continue in chapter III, you make a reference to when you look at the idea that value is quantities of work, that is the content, you discovered it analytically. Then he says: but we have to return to the expression of this. And then what is going to unfold is the form, and in that unfolding of the form it is going to advance to money and so on. But in Chapter III, when the question of the unity between social production and consumption appears, what is going to appear, he says it like this: value is never expressed in quantities of its substance, and that is not a defect of the form of value, that is a virtue. Because since social labor is done privately and independently and there is no immediate unity, the only way to establish unity is through the content not expressing itself quantitatively identical to itself in form.

Because if I have something that says "10 hours of work", and because there is too much of it, I am going to change it for something that contains 9 hours of work, I cannot have a form that says "this is worth 10 hours of work", or "9 hours of work": I need a form where the amount of work has been hidden. So, it's worth more or less money, and the price can fluctuate. If value were to be expressed in quantities of labour, it could not fluctuate. Although I have it in mind because in what we did with Jesus[278], there I took, for Cockshott and Cotrell, for whom value is quantity of work, and consequently it is ahistorical, they put the nonsense that the organization that there is going to be of production is going to be with hourly titles, but that if there is more demand for one of these commodities than the supply, then they are going to change the number of hours it represents. So, what I was saying: are they going to put "9h" on "10h", or if it is missing they are going to put "11h"? So, I'm going to go with a voucher that says "10h" and I'm going to have to change it for one that says "11h" when I already knew it was the same, that they locked up the same amount of time.

That is where the need for form is founded. First it is simply that it can never be expressed as quantity of its substance, and there it is because the work is private. So, no one has the power to say that the product of their work is the product of social labor. But then it follows a form, which is an already concrete form of that

[278] "Critique of Market Socialism - With Juan Iñigo Carrera".

development, and actually if one follows it beyond that it comes to Volume 3, the development of the necessity of that form. So this is the relationship between content and form and structure of development. If things were immediately affirmed, form could never be different from content: there would be no form other than content, no content other than form. This is what logical representation does. Part of this: there is no content other than form and no form other than content (in general, it emphasizes the former, but implies the latter). Just because the content affirms itself in its form by negating itself as content, the form is not identical with the content, and so I will always have before me forms that are the negation of the content. And that can manifest itself as being completely different from the content, or that they are the transformed content itself, in the sense that I see it as the content, but at the same time it is not the purity of that content. Forms that are openly the opposite of content, and forms that are the content developed, are not the opposite of content.

I'm going to put it like this, especially for living subjects. If we look at the content of these appearances of circulation, it is clear that it is the opposite of form, that content affirms itself by negating itself in form as its opposite. If I look at a living subject in its transformation, I look at myself in this moment, and I am affirming myself all the time through my own negation, because I have a temporal quantitative determination that is unfolding all the time. Now: in that movement, I breathed and spoke, and I am no longer the same concrete as I was immediately before. So, I am denying myself as that which I was, I am affirming myself as denying myself as that which I was to reproduce myself. So, I am not the opposite of what I was, but I am the unfolding of a transformation that reproduces myself in the form of a human being. Let's put it like this, that's being very pretentious, what do I know if I'm a human being, but well, let's be optimistic. These are the effects of yesterday's match[279], which one no longer even knows how to recognize oneself: everything was so clear... [Laughs] There was a content that could only be affirmed under a concrete form identical to the content, and it turns out that it was affirmed as the opposite of the content. But well, maybe the content was not what you thought there was. I don't know if it's clearer, Javiera.

And the problem that one has is (that is why I also posed this): in my opinion, Marx in the development of *Capital*, in general, is sometimes not so like that, but he respects very much the unity of the dialectical method: I start with a concrete, it is presented to me as an immediate concrete, I ask myself about its necessity and I unfold its necessity. Chapter I is that par excellence; but when one sees that it passes, for example, to Chapter IV, one does that again, because one looks again at capital in circulation. I always say (even Marx makes some reference later): one could start that chapter by saying: if money as a means of payment closes the movement in circulation, and money in circulation can only buy, what is next? Buy the conditions to start again. Well, and I have the deployment of *Capital*. Marx takes on an exposition structure which is: and now I see that actually, in circulation, the movement of commodities is not like what I was seeing, that there is another movement. At that point, when he analyzes it, as he has already developed the simplest determinations of that movement, he does not have to go back to the

[279] Reference to the 1:2 defeat of the Argentine national football team against the Saudi national team on the first day of the 2022 World Cup.

beginning, but he can immediately synthesize everything he has discovered so far and begin to say: well, but equivalents are changed, so that no more value can emerge from the change than what entered. And he goes through those bits of analysis that lead him to the simplest determination that is already known.

In reality, he is going to unfold it in a much longer unit, because one can synthesize it like this (the chapter is not strictly like that), but chapter IV begins with that confrontation with the immediate concrete, continues with the analysis, but reaches the analysis. It is chapter V that has the deployment of necessity, how it is that capital can be valorized. And if we look at what we are looking at now, what is appearing is the concrete forms. Just as the consciousness of the commodity producer closes Chapter I with regard to fetishistic consciousness: it is clear that it begins with consciousness because the commodity is the bearer of the social relation of the commodity producer, and there it recognizes itself in its commodity as an individual organ of the process of social life. But here we are coming to the consciousness of individuals, not merely the form that the valorization of capital and the necessity of its form takes, but it is the necessity of consciousness that personifies that movement. Now, that virtue of showing the unity of the dialectical method has been taken many times – Rubin is one of those who takes this more crudely – as: well, these are "themes, there is the theme of "value", the theme of "exchange value", the theme "fetishism of the commodity", the theme "money"... and on each topic he has a written essay. And this is what we have in front of us. I don't know if you want to propose anything else.

Alejandro: First I have a mention regarding Javiera's question, that in the book I have a footnote in which she makes a whole series of methodological observations, from the 4th edition, and makes this observation that the deployment of the capitalist mode of production implies the generalization of commodity production, which imposes itself by developing all its hidden powers, and there he speaks of the immanent laws themselves. It seems to me that perhaps it can be oriented to the question that Javiera asked. The question arises for me, and I don't know if it can be answered, but... The beginning with the commodity is clear to me, now that we are going through expanded reproduction, what was the need to start from there. But at the same time, if the commodity, being that content that is affirming itself by means of its own negation until it reaches capital in the unfolding, and now it seems that capital is what governs all human life in this mode of production, the question arises to me whether now capital is the content and the commodity ceased to be the content and became subordinate to what valorization is of value. Is it like there's an inversion there in the content, or am I seeing wrong?

That is a first question. The other question I have is that I began to read the *Phenomenology*, and what you mentioned about the form, the content and asking yourself again about the form, can it be that in phenomenology it is like the for-itself of consciousness, the in-itself and the for-itself of the in-itself? Is it analogous to that movement that Hegel makes or is it something else?

JIC: Yes, yes. Do this again. It is that movement, but it always appears inverted as the genesis of the thought of the concrete.

Alejandro: It presents itself as an abstract becoming of consciousness, isn't it?

JIC: Yes. That is why these are the three steps that Hegel always makes. With respect to the other thing you were proposing, we now see that the commodity is the form of existence of capital. I said the other time: this immense accumulation of commodities is the product of capital. And now we discover that this immense accumulation of commodities actually had a unity, it was not a simple accumulation of commodities: it was the expression of the movement of reproduction of capital. Now: what we had here was that the commodity was not the content, the content is the substance of value, which has a form. And here the content remains, and that was the substance of value... [...][280], the content that is developed is the value. Value is how the total capacity of the total labour power available to society is allocated in the various useful concrete forms to be carried out by each individual organ of the process of social life: that is the content. And capital is the way in which that content is governed. So, this is the deployment: from the simplest content, we continue to advance on the increasingly developed concrete forms that that simpler content takes.

What this development does now is what I said before: it shows us the need for the starting point with which we started. When we started, it appeared arbitrary: in the society where the capitalist mode of production prevails, social wealth is presented as an immense accumulation of commodities, and the commodity as its elementary form. So, we start with the commodity. We had done very quickly, very roughly, an analysis that led us to the commodity. But if we look at it without that analysis, and which is also how Marx's development is often looked at...

That is why it is important to me to start the workshop with that thick analysis, because that is the key to the method and the question. Marx's criticisms of development appear, saying: why start with the commodity? Because that's an economics book. Because, for example, a sociology book would start with another aspect of capitalist society, a psychology book, it starts with the consciousness of individuals... and in reality it is arbitrary where one starts. Now that we are advancing, what we are finding is that the need for the starting point is becoming clear. Why do we start with the commodity? Because in effect, capital, which is the development we have so far, presents itself in its movement as an immense accumulation of commodities.

So, development has to account for the need for its starting point. And this is one of the things that are proper to the dialectical reproduction of the concrete and are not proper to logical representation, which on the contrary, what it accepts is that it cannot account for the necessity of its starting point. There is no need other than what is repeated, and then I cannot answer why this was repeated, what was the need for it to be repeated. I am simply going to have built a theoretical representation, a model in which I started from that which repeats, and there is no need: it is simply whether it is present or not. […]

[280] The phone rings.

3. Division of surplus value into capital and income. The theory of abstinence.

Up to this point we have seen the determinations of the worker as a seller of labor power, and how his condition as a doubly free individual links him to the reproduction of capital, thus organizing the process of social life. [...] In the process of reproduction that we know so far, all surplus value goes to the individual consumption of the capitalist; And now what we are going to have is that a part of that surplus value is converted into new capital. One part goes to consumption as income[281] – here the term "rent" is current income – and the other part returns, accumulates as capital. So far what immediately appears is: well, how is it determined which part goes to one and which part goes to the other?

And the first question that arises is that, given a total mass of surplus value, the more it goes to the individual consumption of the capitalist, the less it can go to accumulation and vice versa. And immediately what he is going to propose is, if one puts it in the terms, of what is the independent variable, it is accumulation that governs the division of surplus value, it is not the individual consumption of the capitalist. The finality, as we have already seen, is precisely when we look at simple reproduction, it is emptied from the axis of the movement of capital, the purpose of the production of capital is the multiplication of capital. When you look at simple playback, that is erased. Now that we are looking at expanded reproduction, what we are going to have is, in fact, that the portion that governs the distribution between consumption and accumulation is the needs of capital accumulation. That being said, what appears is precisely the way in which this is carried in the consciousness of the capitalist. Because if you look at it externally, what appears is that it is the consciousness of the capitalist that resolves how much goes to each side. So, what is going to appear in this development are the determinations of the capitalist's consciousness that make him act by personifying capital.

The first thing that will appear is the historical determination of which the capitalist is the bearer and under what conditions he affirms himself in this. And this is where for me there is a very clear synthesis (I use it a lot), when he raises the historical right of the capitalist to exist: only when he acts as personified capital, does the capitalist have "a value before history", he has a historical right to exist, of which he then clarifies that it is not an acquired right. In the translation of FCE it is better than in the 21st century. Because in the FCE it says "no date",[282] which is the legal term that corresponds to "it is not acquired", it has no origin, it has to be renewed all the time. In the translation of siglo XXI I don't remember exactly how it says, but it has a negation "that has no date", but it is not simply that it does not have a date, it is that it is not an acquired right, it has no origin, it always has to be renewed.

So why does he put that condition on it? Because the capitalist is the private organizer of social labor, and as such, he is the one who develops the productive forces of labor under the capitalist form, which is—I use Marx's terms—

[281] In Siglo XXI it says "revenue".
[282] Marx, K. (1977: 499), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

"*producing for the sake of producing*." The immediate purpose for which social labor is set in motion is not to produce use values for the consumption of human beings, it is to produce more capacity to implement social labor both extensively and intensively. And so, the role that the capitalist has to fulfill, his consciousness to fulfill this determination of which he is the personifier, his problem is not use value: it is value, the valorization of capital. And I'm going to repeat the quote, because it says: he's a fanatic, he has to act like a production fanatic, he has to produce for the sake of producing, and that's the way. He says:

> As a fanatic of the valorization of value, the true capitalist *relentlessly* compels humanity to produce for the *sake of producing*, and thus to develop the *productive social forces* and to create the *material conditions of production* which are the only *real basis* for a higher form of society whose fundamental principle is the full and free development of all individuals.[283]

The capitalist is respectable only as the personification of capital. Having stated this, which is the content of the determination of the subjectivity of the capitalist and his historical role, what he is going to unfold is how the capitalist is presented with the need for how much he has to accumulate and how much he has to consume. And what is going to appear is that, just as the worker in his individual consumption is forced to satisfy the needs of capital, the capitalist, whether he wants to or not, has to fulfill the role of personification of capital, because if he does not expand capital, if he does not increase the productivity of the labor of his workers, he is dead. It is the competition in the capitalist mode of production that forces it to act as a capitalist. And so what is going to appear is that the capitalist has his will alienated in capital. And he is going to put forward a simple expression of this by saying that, insofar as he has to act as the personification of capital, his consciousness and his will have to personify the accumulation of capital, and then everything he consumes for himself, all his individual consumption, is presented to him as a robbery that he is committing against his own capital. And here, then, an unfolding of how the consciousness of the capitalist evolves in the development of the accumulation of capital itself, in a process that has a historical character, will be opened.

And the first expression that this is going to take is that the capitalist who is already in a phase of prosperity (which now there is a slightly longer development), can already consume a part of the surplus value in his individual consumption, the ideologues of capital present the role of the capitalist inverted with the proposal that capital springs from the "abstinence" of the capitalist and the sacrifice that he makes to accumulate. So, what begins as the need of capital for the capitalist to pour the greatest amount of surplus value into accumulation, appears ideologically inverted as a sacrifice made by the capitalist, refrains from consumption and sacrifices himself to accumulation. This is so clear in the development of historical ideological production that Marx always speaks of the abstinent capitalist as the figure who makes the vulgar economy of his time.

I don't have it marked so that I can read it verbatim, but in Marshall's economics manual, what it literally says is: well, at this point, to propose that the capitalist

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[283] Ibid.

abstains from consuming, doesn't seem like much... In reality, the problem of the capitalist is not that he abstains from consuming but that he waits to consume and that is the sacrifice he makes. And since the marginal utility of commodities over time is decreasing, in order to maximize their total well-being, what they have to do is that, if they waited to consume, tomorrow they need to consume more than they would have consumed today, when they had to consume today and waited; since the utility that the same good produces tomorrow is smaller, then it needs compensation and interest is that compensation for waiting. So it is very visible, because the vulgar economist who is making this rationale starts by saying that this abstinence is not very appropriate. Because of course, Marshall's book is already... I don't remember if it was from the first decade of the twentieth century, and the capitalists of that time no longer look like individuals who "sacrifice" themselves for the sake of capital accumulation.

So, what is going to appear is that, if [before] there was the figure of the original capitalist, the Calvinist figure of the industrious and thrifty individual, austere in his life, now what is going to appear is that, with the multiplication of wealth, and he says, in addition, with the development of speculation ["and the credit system"[284],] and the possibility of making wealth quickly, the possibility begins to appear that the capitalist will have a waste of surplus value in his person. And at the same time, how that expenditure that the capitalist makes in his individual life becomes an aspect of the personification of his capital. Because what appears as the "representation expenses"[285] of capital, because if the capitalist spends, the image is that he is prosperous, and therefore worthy of receiving credit; the capitalist is in the places he has to be to do business on behalf of his capital. And then the individual consumption of the capitalist, in this sense too, appears to be acting in the service of the interest of *his* capital. And then, Marx is going to make the contrast: the more he extracts surplus value from his workers, the more he forces them to deprive themselves of all enjoyment in life and the more he increases the waste he makes in his own person. And then he says: there are reconciled the two faces of the capitalist, the one who accumulates and the one who spends on himself.

In that exposition there is a statement that I think is important to highlight because it says:

> Apart from the fact that the capitalist does not enrich himself, like the hoarder, in proportion to his personal labour and what he fails to spend on himself, but in proportion as he absorbs the labour-power of others and compels his workmen to abstain from all the joys of life[286].

Because in a series of proposals it appears that the capitalist contributes to the valorization of his capital in the figure of the entrepreneur. And what this capitalist can contribute to his capital is the value that he produces, but he cannot produce surplus value, because he does not buy his own labor power. Consequently, even assuming that his labor were productive of value and that he did extremely

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[284] Ibid., p. 500.
[285] Ibid.: "Luxury becomes part of the expenses of representation of capital".
[286] Ibid.

complex work, which required a long time to develop the capacities to do so, all he could produce is the value that corresponds to his working day. One could say: it works 24 hours a day, but it cannot produce more value than that. And his capital bears no relation to the magnitude of that personal work. His management as an "entrepreneur" consists of how to extract surplus value as efficiently as possible from his workers, it is not to produce the same value through his personal work. I have this very much in mind because they gave me a book (it seems that the "Anti-Marx" are fashionable) by an Argentine economist who was an official of international organizations all his life, I think, and now as an old man he has decided to write a very erudite work on *Capital* to show that Marx was wrong in the development of surplus value. because it did not take into account what the work of the entrepreneur contributes to the valorization of capital.

Then this appears, that neither of the two conditions can throw anything in each other's faces. But he goes on to say again that "in the noble breast of the individual capitalist there is amassing a demoniacal conflict between the instinct of accumulation and the instinct of enjoyment."[287] And so, you're going to make a reference of... the subjectivity of the capitalist, which later in proposals within Marxism will be presented as if it were the cause of the accumulation of capital; and it is not the cause: it is the way in which the determinations proper to the capitalist mode of production and the necessity of capital are carried in the subjectivity of the capitalist. "Accumulating for the sake of accumulating, producing for the sake of producing," he says, "in this formula classical economics collects and proclaims history, the historical mission of the bourgeois period."[288] That is the immediate manifestation. Now: that is not the content of the movement; The content is what we saw earlier of a social relation that sets social labor in motion with the immediate purpose of multiplying the capacity to set in motion social labor, as a form of development of the productive forces of labor. So here what he begins to do is a development of how political economy is seeing it.

In classical economics there appears this determination that it is necessary to accumulate, that the capitalist does not have to waste. He is going to quote Malthus, an ideological spokesman for the Anglican Church who was one, if not the largest landowner in England, and represented the landowners who claimed that the capitalists had to take care of production and the landed aristocracy, the state and church officials, for whom this was the function of squandering wealth.
I don't know if I mentioned to you, I don't think so, an example of this type of proposal that he immediately makes to Argentine society. Which is the proposal that Jauretche makes.

Jauretche is more or less present in Argentina not as a very elaborate theoretician, but with a discourse regarding the characteristics of Argentine society. He was a furious reactionary; He said: Society is divided into three classes: capitalist landowners and workers. Each of these classes has a role within society: the workers, to work – of course, in "dignified" conditions – and has no other concern (which is later synthesized in some way in the Peronist apothegm: "From home to work, and from work to home"). The bourgeoisie (use this term), its

[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid., 501.

function is to organize work, it is the organizer of the life of society. And the landowning class are the ones who have the titles to squander the wealth, because it's theirs, so there's nothing to object to. It is an aristocratic class that does not play an active role in the life of society, it simply enjoys its wealth. What is Argentina's problem from Jauretche's point of view? That the Argentine bourgeoisie was confused and believes that it has the place of the landowning class, and instead of taking care of managing the wealth of society and multiplying it, they intend to squander it, and instead of having "bourgeois values", they have "landowning values", and that is the problem. This is synthesized in Jauretche's book, entertaining to read because he wrote almost amusingly, one could say, *El medio pelo en la sociedad argentina*. It is a term that comes from the Argentine landowning class, although they want to use it to... It shows so much that he is linked to that that he used the term "half a hair".

Alejandro: What you are mentioning now and which is also clearer to me with Marx, that conflict in the practical consciousness of the capitalist, how present is it when the magnitude of accumulation is such that with a small portion of the capitalist's consumption fund he has to throw butter on the ceiling, when it does not cause him problems to have all those kinds of luxuries?

JIC: The answer I would have to give is "yes and no." Because what continues to govern what part you are going to spend is what you are going to accumulate. And if one looks at a relatively current process, it is synthesized with the proposal made by Dumenil and Levy regarding what changed in the capitalist mode of production in the last quarter of the twentieth century, that which I propose of the universal worker, differentiation, etc. They see it as meaning that there was an antagonistic relationship of struggle between managers and capitalists in which, until the last quarter of the 20th century, managers triumphed. What do managers want, what is it that allows them to reproduce themselves as managers and also in increasingly better conditions? Their role is to accumulate, not to squander surplus value. So, they look at that and say: until the mid-1970s, managers triumphed and surplus value accumulated at the expense of the individual consumption of the capitalists. What happens from that point on? First they pose it as capitalists taking revenge, and now they triumph over managers. Then they pose it as that the managers allied themselves with the capitalists against the working class (as time goes by, the approach changes halfway).

Now: when one looks at the content of the difference in the two stages, it is that this stage is characterized by a permanent presence of the overproduction of commodities, and therefore of a barrier to the accumulation of capital. What is to be done with surplus value, if there is surplus value to accumulate, part of it is not even realized, but there is capital left over? The way not to accumulate is waste. And what is going to appear is that managers too, allies... They always propose that the manager is the one who has to personify, to manage the social relationship of the capitalist; Well, when that social relationship that has the form of a thing can be put in his pocket, he puts it in his pocket and bye. So, what appears is an enormous expansion of individual consumption by capitalists and managers. Where there was a wage difference of a certain degree, that wage difference loses all measure, such is the abyss of difference that it is no longer that he earns ten or twenty times

more than a worker: he earns a thousand times. And the phenomenon appears in which managers advance on the appropriation of surplus value.

Managers and landowners... I mean, we're back to the World Cup: it's an exhibition of landowners' wealth like never seen before in the history of humanity, but which, in its scale, refers to what the city of Manaus was with rubber. That in principle one may think that the same thing is going to happen to this, because when synthetic rubber is discovered or rubber production is taken elsewhere, the city is lost, it is eaten up by the jungle. And the Argentine landowners of the early twentieth century, with the arrival of Italian and French architects to build what at that time were palaces, which had no relation to the needs of the family: it is the waste of the landowner. So, the question is to what extent the capitalist's waste that one sees now not only responds to the magnitude of the capital he has, but also responds to the fact that he has nothing to do with that surplus value. That if he wanted to accumulate it —overproduction would explode—; therefore, the only possibility is to spend it unproductively, not to buy the labor power of productive laborers. For me that is at stake in this historical moment in a very marked way

Alejandro: How sustainable is that Juan? Eating up their own capital that is incapable of continuing to accumulate.

JIC: One of the manifestations is that, except in China and a few other countries in East Asia, the growth of national economies is much slower than in the 1960s. This is a very general observation, the concrete rate of profit does not seem to have recovered the levels it had in the 60s; we would have to see in China, because it is not so clear that this is the case. But what is appearing is the movement like this, we have to see what form the next phase is going to take, supposedly of expansion of capital accumulation, with huge masses of things that look like wealth and that can stop looking like wealth very quickly. But that by the time we get to Volume 3, for now it is there.

Javiera: What, Juan? What did you mean by the fact that they may seem like wealth but they can cease to be...?

JIC: We're going to see that in Volume 3. That it seems to exist as an accumulated wealth and that suddenly this is purely fictitious.

Alejandro: The credits?

JIC: It's one of the examples.

Javiera: But something like what happened in 2008?

JIC: Sharper than 2008.

Alejandro: As long as the process doesn't take us over and we can get to Volume 3 to answer it... [Laughs].

JIC: So we continue with the capitalist and its consumption.

It is the same path we had before but put in ideological terms. So, first what is going to appear is the demand to the capitalist so that... There is a Ricardian who is the representative of the English capitalists who protests against forcing the capitalist to accumulate, and not letting him enjoy life, but at the same time it seems to him perfectly justified and necessary that the workers should be paid as little as possible in order to stimulate their industriousness. And then comes the vulgar economy with abstinence: instead of "capital," he says, the term "abstinence" must be used. It is also Senior who makes this proposal, which no longer came from the final hour, but instead of calling it "capital" it should be called "abstinence".

This has an ideological presence. Today in Argentina it is very present that the worker must thank the capitalist for giving him work, and that in reality he could dedicate himself to enjoyment, and abstains from consuming to lend the worker the tools of work. And he makes another observation that also applies to the expectation of consumption, more immediately in abstinence: surplus value has material forms, which are going to be converted into new constant capital and do not have a form that can be destined to individual consumption. And Marx is going to end the irony by saying that in reality the capitalist class should be "liberated" from this torment of having to eat steam engines and so on. And he has a whole series of figures about how he steals from his own father when instead of consuming on his person he allocates surplus value to accumulation, which even the conservation of capital implies resisting the temptation to consume it, to devour it; And well, that the capitalist must be freed from this. And he draws the parallel with the abolition of slavery in the United States, which he says has freed the southern slaveholder from the tragic dilemma of whether he should spend all the profit he had whipped from the slaves on more champagne or on buying more slaves.

And there is this, that when one takes it to modern neoclassical and Austrian economics, it is the problem of waiting to consume. They differ in that in neoclassical economics Marshall is going to say that waiting is a factor of production that is combined with different forms of work. But waiting can be a factor in production in whiskey production; it does not appear to be a factor of production in any other production process.

Alejandro: Marx's observation about the must also goes there, doesn't it?

JIC: I put the whiskey after Marshall, who says that it is a factor of production. But fermentation is a production time that is not a work time. Later in Volume 2 all these questions will appear, but I say: one factor is an active subject, and the active subjects that operate in fermentation are bacteria, fungi or whatever, it is not waiting that produces the coso. But in any case, in the process of human production, the only factor of production is the worker, it is the human subject.

4. Circumstances which, independently of the proportional division of surplus-value into capital and revenue, determine the volume of accumulation: degree of exploitation of labour-power; productive labor power; magnitude of the capital advanced; The growing difference between the capital employed and the capital consumed.

These two questions arise in connection with the fact that accumulation depends above all on the surplus value that is available. The mass of surplus value is linked to the rate of surplus value. And the rate of surplus value depends on the degree of exploitation of labor power. The starting point, and the normal condition, is that the wage corresponds to the value of the labor power. But Marx in this development is going to consider the circumstances that allow the capitalist to pay for labor power below value and how then, what in the terms of classical economics appeared as the fund of workers' consumption, becomes a fund for the accumulation of capital, because labor power is paid below value. and then that surplus value that is extracted on this basis feeds, multiplies the powers of the accumulation of capital.

And here he is going to make a reference that we had already seen to the demand for labor power in relation to the working day, and now it is put in relation to the magnitude of capital. I am in order in this. What appears from here on out, at least until the end of the chapter, is: if we have the basis of the general and normal accumulation of capital up to this point, what is going to appear now is elasticity in the capacity for accumulation. If up to this point accumulation depended on the absolute magnitude of surplus value with respect to the magnitude of existing capital – that is, the rate of accumulation, well, and that is, how much the working day is and the value of labor power – what is going to appear are ways of multiplying the accumulation capacity of capital. some normal, some extraordinary. And the payment of labor power appeared below value.

What follows is to extend the working day, either of the same workers or in successive shifts, so that with the same constant capital in machinery the start-up of living labour can be multiplied and consequently surplus value can be multiplied. If at first accumulation appeared as a question of whether constant and variable capital is going to increase in a certain proportion, we now find a possibility of multiplying accumulation by using the same constant capital, bringing it into contact with a greater mass of variable capital through the extension of the working day in which this constant capital is put to work. What is going to happen is that it is going to be spent faster, but it is going to be renewed and the value of that constant capital is going to reappear more quickly in the value of the product.

And here he is also going to make a synthesis that resembles what appeared when we saw what was happening in the production of relative surplus value, the development of machinery in agriculture, he says:

> The result of all this is that, when the two primordial factors of wealth, labour power and land, are annexed, capital acquires an expansive force which enables it to extend

> the elements of its accumulation beyond the limits apparently traced by its own magnitude, traced by the value and mass of the means of production already produced. in which capital takes shape[289].

And then, this elasticity that capital has to accumulate appears.

When the productivity of labour increases in a given day, the mass of use-values produced is multiplied, but the mass of value does not change. And consequently, given the value of labor power and the working day, the mass of surplus value that has been produced does not change. The total quantity of labour is the same, the total quantity of value is the same. What has multiplied is the mass of use-values produced, and this multiplied mass allows the capitalist to multiply his individual consumption by reducing the portion of value he devotes to that consumption. The next step is that, at the same time, it will cheapen labor power and increase the rate of surplus value.

And here Marx is going to make the observation by saying that even if the real wage rises, the quantity of use-values that the worker receives, nevertheless, can contain so much less value that the value of that labor power decreases. That is to say, part of what was the surplus value that he consumed is freed, although he consumes more use values to transform the new capital, and his labor power was cheapened, so that with the same variable capital he can put more labor power to work, and with respect to constant capital the value of the means of production was also cheapened. and with the same constant capital, materially, production expands. And since materially more labor power is put into operation because there are more means of production on which it is going to be applied, with a higher productivity of labor, and therefore with a higher rate of surplus value, the movement of accumulation is going to be multiplying, intensifying because its material base is expanding both in terms of constant capital and in terms of variable capital. And the synthesis he is going to make is: the scale of reproduction increases by the material base, but since at the same time the rate of surplus value increases, the production of surplus value grows faster than the value of the new capital grows.

[II]

JIC: First, as always, if there is anything you want us to return to from the previous time, or in general something to discuss about what we have so far.

Alejandro: I don't know if it's a detail, but I've been analyzing it. This question of how the tenant appears, I understand, Marx mentions in the domestic industry, and only in passing, as if it were a relationship of direct theft. I don't know how problematic that statement can be. Perhaps we overlooked it in the last class, but I faced the question and began to see who had dealt with it, including Engels in the *Contribution to the Housing Problem*, and it seems to appear in the opposite way,

[289] Ibid., p. 509.

so to speak. In fact, the position of direct theft was that of the Proudhonians, if I have not misunderstood and it strikes me that Marx mentions it in this way.

JIC: Can you read it?

Alejandro: Yes, yes. The paragraph is long, but I can read the specific passage. On the previous page of this question came from the ideological proposition that the worker does not have to consume anything, while the capitalist lives in opulence, he mentions the classes of England compared to France and Holland, and then... I read the specific excerpt:

> The tenant has increased his own profits by preventing the worker from accumulating the most indispensable consumer fund. The so-called "household industry", for example, has shown what is the role that the direct robbery that is perpetrated against the necessary consumption fund of the worker plays today in the formation of surplus-value and therefore of the accumulation fund of capital.

JIC: I suppose I would associate it, seen like this... Because, does it refer to the tenant capitalist in contrast to the peasant? Alejandro.

Alejandro: I haven't mentioned the question of the situation of the peasant so explicitly, but it can be; now that I'm rereading it, I can't find a direct mention of the peasantry.

JIC: No, because if the tenant appears, it has to be the rural capitalist tenant. And the consumer fund... It occurs to me to associate it with two things. One is because it makes a reference to the home industry: the peasant who could, outside the seasons, the moments of cultivation, is the source of labor power of home production, or home work. And it would be necessary to see throughout the paragraph what changes with the tenant. Now: the term "theft" is simply put, I understand, as if it takes away all possibility of accumulating a fund for consumption.

When we looked at the doubly free worker... Perhaps I have a tendency to emphasize that it is separate from its means of production. Marx says: it is of their means of production *and* their means of subsistence. And in this chapter, when the condition of forced labor of the worker who sells labor power appears, it appears closely linked to the fact that the worker's own individual consumption is what separates him from his means of subsistence. Because once he has spent his wages on buying means of living and consumed them, he has no more means of living, and consequently the only possibility he has to continue to reproduce his life is to sell his labor power again. Now, the term "theft" gives me the impression that it is simply posed as a figure, as if it "tears it away," rather than as a content of the form that the social relationship has. I would have to place it in... If you don't tell me, in Volume 1, what volume is it in? In volume 2?

Alejandro: Yes, volume 2 of the 21st century.

JIC: Yes, and what page?

Alejandro: 745. [...]

JIC: Think that what you are doing is citing an author, eh? He says: "a bourgeois author":

> "In this way," exclaims a bourgeois writer of the time, "the tenants degraded themselves for years to a respectable class of their countrymen, *forcing them* to resort to the *workhouse* [...] The tenant has *increased his own profits by preventing the worker from accumulating the most indispensable consumer fund*."

Here comes the thing about him:

> The so-called household industry, for example, has shown what is the role played today in the formation of surplus-value and therefore of the *accumulation fund of capital*, by the direct robbery perpetrated against the necessary consumption fund of the worker.

Now reading it, I don't know, we would have to look at everything that is coming, all the above, to see what "direct theft" implies. Taken like this loose I can't tell you. But what is at stake is the transformation of something which is the necessary consumption fund of the worker into the accumulation fund of capital. Nothing, because he is using here the term "consumer fund", the term of the bourgeois writer, Parry, he is referring to that figure, to which he is not even paid the value of the labor power. What they are doing is that, by paying them sustainably below the value of labor power, they do not allow them to reproduce normally. And they have transformed what should have been the replacement of that labor power, the payment for its value, into profits for capital. And so the term "accumulation of the most indispensable consumer fund" is that the workers are unable to dispose of the use-values, the most indispensable elements of consumption.

And the reference to the home industry is that they do not pay the worker even what corresponds to the value of the labor power. "Direct theft", I understand that the term, beyond whether it is a figure of translation or not, refers to the advance on the value of labor power. It is not that he is talking about the accumulation fund being theft, but that he is using the term "theft" in the sense that they are taking away what he needs to reproduce his labor power, that they reproduce it in worse and worse conditions and on that basis capital is accumulated. I would say no more than this, reading it as what appears here.

Alejandro: Now it is a little clearer to me that it would be one of those forms of elasticity that you mention of labor power.

JIC: Exactly, advancing the value of labor power as one of the ways that... First there were the normal conditions of valorization, of accumulation, where there was the sale of labor power for its value, and then these elasticities that capital has appeared, one of them advancing on the reproduction of labor power. I don't know if there is anything else they want to raise, but we are moving forward on that.

Alejandro: Okay, Juan. I had that doubt because I understood that Engels was debating with those positions that propose direct theft and that mention caught my attention, but well, now it is a little clearer to me.

JIC: Yes, no, but look, then I try to see if the term is like "theft" in everyone or not. But anyway, what you are discussing with Proudhon... Marx, in the letter he wrote when Proudhon died, makes a reference to the proposal that property is theft, and the criticism is that it is necessary to substantiate where it comes from, how private property is born from private labor and the exchange of equivalents, not from theft; under the appearance or concrete form of the exchange of equivalents, how the exploitation of the worker by capital is enclosed, and what is the source of the private property of the capitalist, which cannot be explained as a simple robbery, but contains all this mediation. But then the term "it tears him away" appears; Precisely when it is not mediated by what is the purely proper determination of the movement of the social relation in the capitalist mode of production, what appears is: well, here yes, even here one can speak of "stealing" because it is already directly taking away conditions from the reproduction of the worker's labor power. The opposite content no longer mediates in a change of equivalents, but here what mediates is that there is no change of equivalents, but I would not give it more significance than that.

Well, then we continue with these expressions of elasticity. We have seen that the mass of means of production, the mass of means of subsistence for the working population, and the material scale of production increase, without the mass of value having changed; The same mass of value, of surplus value, is now capable of putting into material operation a larger mass of labour power endowed with a larger mass of means of production, and this multiplies the production of surplus value. [...] We had seen the salary, hadn't we? That even if the real wage were to rise, there would still be a material mass of means of production and means of subsistence for the workers, that even if the workers could have more use-values for their consumption, that mass multiplied with a sufficiently high productivity of labor is still enough to employ more workers and therefore to have more variable capital put to work.

What followed that we had not seen was the question of the effect of the increase in the productivity of labor, not on new capital, but on old capital that was already in production. What is going to happen is that new methods of production are being incorporated, even on the capital that is already in operation, raw materials and auxiliary materials will be available whose production is renewed all the time, and consequently they are produced with multiplied labor productivity. And all this will allow a multiplication of the appreciation of capital that goes even further than old capital and that will have this elasticity effect that we saw before. But in addition, the old capital that exhausts its useful life materially, is going to be renewed not by the same machine that was in operation until then, but it is going to take the material form of a new machine, capable of sustaining a productivity of labor greater than that which it had. Then, the value of that old capital is going to be materially renewed in the form of a machinery that responds to the new productivity of labor.

Then, this movement is going to appear that increases the capacity of capital to generate surplus value, but at the same time it is going to have as a manifestation, it is going to have an impact on the value of the old capital causing a part of that old capital to depreciate; either it can be kept in function, but it can no longer transfer the magnitude of value that it transferred before to its product; it is that it can no longer be maintained in the same place. production because the new machinery sustains a productivity of labor that does not allow that old capital, at any depreciation, to be able to maintain itself in production. Then, this phenomenon of depreciation of old capital is going to appear, which, what Marx is going to propose, how it sharpens the competition between capitals and how capital unloads this sharpening of competition on the workers by redoubling exploitation. So, even this process that devalues a part of capital, sharpens, stimulates capital for the multiplication of the production of surplus value. Here this is generally at the expense of the workers, it is not simply normal exploitation, but it is an extraordinary multiplication of exploitation.

Here in all this development what appears is, once again, the question that we saw before the determination of value, not simply because of the amount of work it cost to produce the machinery, the commodity, at the time, but because of the amount of work it costs to reproduce that machinery today in conditions that it is put into operation today. Something that underlies this question of the depreciation of the old existing machinery, because now it suffers the effect of "moral exhaustion" and we had the two forms of moral exhaustion: or that a machine that is capable of sustaining the same productivity of labor as the old one, costs less than the old one; or that a machine may cost the same, or even more than the old one, but sustain a productivity of labor so much greater than the value that the old machine transfers to the value of the product. The decrease in value that is achieved with that new machine more than compensates for the lower value that the old machine has, but which, transferred to the value of the product, is higher than that transferred by the new machine. I don't know if I was clear because I got stuck in the middle, but is this clear? Alejandro, you wanted to intervene.

Alejandro: Yes. It is a short question but, let's say, what would be the maintenance costs, which appear for the machine to remain in operation, would they somehow enter into these considerations, or are they outside the analysis that Marx is doing here? The question would be because there are machines that, beyond the analysis of the productivity that can put into operation VS what the machine itself costs, what is also taken into account is the maintenance cost of the machine. Because some may require many more hours of work at certain times of the year for maintenance and others may not.

JIC: Yes, that is implicit in the lower productivity of the work that operates with that old machine, because the direct work of production must be added to the indirect work of maintenance. Consequently, the value of the commodity produced with the old machine, taken as the individual value of the commodity produced with the old machine, is higher than the individual value of the commodity produced with the new machine. So yes, all additional expenses. Also, if the machine is less efficient in energy consumption, what will happen is that the value of the constant capital that transfers the value of the product will be greater, and

that will also be reflected as a determination of the moral wear and tear of the machinery. The [old] machine can no longer transfer all that value from constant capital to the value of the product, because the new machine does not include that transfer.

Well, and he is already reaching the synthesis of all the development he has been doing. What he is going to say is that the volume and value of the means of production increases as the productive power of labor develops. Consequently, what we had, which is for that capital to retain its value, has to be put in contact with labor power, that labor power preserves the value of a mass of capital that is increasingly larger and that has the material forms that sustain a greater productive power of labor. And here another issue is going to appear that for now is not going to play a central role, but as we continue to advance in development we will see that this difference plays a substantial role.

And we had already seen when we looked at the development of the system of machinery in large-scale industry, which is gradually separated from the capital that is applied to production – capital used or used – the capital consumed. That is, as the constant capital put into the machinery increases, in means of production which serve for many cycles of production, they gradually transfer their value to the product, and then there is a capital which is used, consisting of the material integrity of the machinery, and consequently of the whole value of the machinery; and a consumed capital, which is only the capital that is spent each time it is used. This growing differentiation is going to appear, and Marx is going to restate what he was proposing at the moment when this first appears: capital has these natural forces objectified in the machinery and which it can control, and in order to dispose of these natural forces every time it produces, it only costs it what it spends. that is, the capital consumed, and disposes of the whole body of the machinery free of charge. It costs him nothing: he uses his whole body, but it only costs him the little piece that the machinery wears out at every moment.

Here we have to be careful about being clear about the difference with respect to the capital that the capitalist had to disburse and the figure is this. Because the capitalist had to buy the entire machinery, only that every time he uses it, the cost it has for him is a little piece of what he had to disburse. In the long run he always had the entire body of the machinery and every time he used it, he only used that little piece, so that at the end of the useful life of the machinery he recovered the full value of that machinery.

Well, and what he is going to propose is that in the end, the more production expands, the more capital grows... Here Marx is going to make reference to the paid-up capital, which is the employee, advanced, not the consumed. What he is going to propose as a synthesis is that capital is not a fixed quantity, but that, although it is presented as a fixed, given magnitude, it has a very elastic power to put itself into operation; that this proportion will fluctuate first by the division of surplus value between the individual consumption of the capitalist and the transformation of a part of the surplus value into new capital; that both the labor force... Marx always makes reference to science: the soil, the land, everything that capital has to be able to function, can also be put to work in an elastic way, so that

it can grow faster or slower depending on the circumstances regardless of the magnitude of the capital. A capital of a certain magnitude can be enhanced on the basis of how it uses land, how it uses labor power, how it uses science to multiply its accumulation.

5. The so-called working fund.

And finally, he is going to make an observation that is what Volume 1 cuts out in the development, and that is that he says: so far, this is what we see in the production. We dispense with circulation where there are determinations that make a capital of a certain magnitude have a larger or smaller capacity for accumulation. But that is outside the development that is taking place so far. And in what follows on development, which flows towards what will be highlighted in the next chapter, he says: capital is an elastic magnitude and has these elastic potentialities, despite the fact that "Classical economics," he says, "likes to conceive of social capital as a *fixed magnitude*"[290] that has a given capacity to be valorized. But this, which is a prejudice of classical economics, he says, becomes a dogma in apologetic economics, not for all capital, but for variable capital, for capital that is put into the purchase of labor power, saying that there is a labor fund, a consumption fund for the workers and that this is given, reserved for the consumption of the workers, and is independent of what movement is taking place with capital.

In neoclassical economics, this has already disappeared, that image of the consumer fund, but what appears is that what corresponds to the worker... What we were talking about before, the salary corresponds to the productivity of labor, therefore... [...]. What appears is: what is distributive justice? That each factor of production in equilibrium is paid for its marginal productivity, and that labor is one of the factors. And I always make it clear that the only factor of production is the human being, who through his work makes use of the means of production produced by human labor and those that human labor takes from nature, not placed as abstractly external without directly mediating labor in its appropriation. Then the question that the workers have something in store disappeared. But if we remember something that we had raised when we saw exploitation, the 50:50 proposal appears in Argentina as if that were what corresponds to the consumption fund of the workers for an abstract social justice, as if that were reserved by nature for the consumption of the workers. But hey, this is an observation simply for local use, we no longer talk about the consumption fund directly.

What is going to close this and open the situation of the next chapter is that, having a certain mass of constant capital, which has certain material forms that are going to serve as a means of production, a certain mass of living labor is required. And that consequently this mass of living labour is determined above all by technology, by the technique of production which exists at any given moment in

[290] Marx, K. (1977: 514), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

correspondence with this mass of means of production. What technology does not indicate is the number of workers needed to put this mass of labour into operation, because it depends on the degree of exploitation of the individual labour power, and it does not say what the value is, it says, the price of that labour power: it is only its minimum limit, which is very elastic.

I make a clarification that will play a role in what follows. Why do you say that there is a mass of living labor power, but that this does not correspond to an unequivocal number of workers? Because when he says that it depends on the degree of exploitation of individual labor, that is, it depends on how long the working day lasts. If the working day is longer, the same mass of total living labour is satisfied by a smaller number of labourers. If the individual working day is shorter, then that same mass of living labour requires a larger number of workers. It is worth observing the way in which technology is indirectly determining the length of the day, the intensity of the work depends on technology, and the duration of the day depends on the intensity of the work. But, on the sidelines, when one is looking at the movement, what is going to appear is either more workers with a shorter day, or fewer workers with a longer day. And with this, at least from the point of view of my development, we would have come to the completion of chapter XXII.

Chapter XXIII. The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation

Well, then let's start with chapter XXIII. Perhaps, if we are very efficient, we can get to see point 1, but it seems unlikely to me.
If we look at the flow of the whole section, it starts with simple reproduction, where there is no accumulation of capital, and moves on to an expanded reproduction where what is at stake is the distribution of surplus value between income for the capitalist or new capital destined for accumulation, where references to change in technical conditions appear. in the productivity of work, but it is not fully developed what happens with the incorporation of technical transformations that change the productivity of work. It has been said that what we saw just happened in terms of the elasticity of the multiplication of means of production and means of subsistence for the workers, but now, in the next stage of development, it will completely separate whether there is a change in the productivity of labor from the fact that there is not. And this is directly related to what closes the previous chapter, which was the mass of labor power that a certain mass of constant capital is going to put into operation.

1. Increasing demand for labor power, with accumulation, the composition of capital remaining the same[291]

And so, the title of the first step what you say is: here we are not going to look at changes in the material attributes of capital, and this is what Marx is now going to refer to as the composition of capital. The title is summarized, but now it is going to display what it is referring to. But what one has to keep in mind is that this evolution of the composition of capital is related to what happens to the demand for labor power. It is a relation of magnitudes, and we are going to see what happens to the determination of that relation of magnitudes [...] when it changes, in that relation of magnitude between the mass of constant capital and the demand for labour power, as the magnitude of the composition of capital changes, we have to see what it refers to in particular.

And so, what Marx is going to pose is: here there are two ways in which one can look at the composition of capital. One is the composition of value that capital has, between constant capital (the value of the means of production) and variable capital (the value of labor power), but one can also look at it from the material point of view: on the one hand there are means of production and on the other hand there is living labor power. And here there is a relationship between a mass of means of production that are used (not those that are consumed) and the amount of labor that is needed to start that mass of means of production. And then he says: the one that refers to value is the composition of value and the one that refers to the material composition of capital, he is going to call it technical composition.

[291] In the original of Siglo XXI that I handle, it says "[...] to the composition of capital." I have corrected it.

Aristides: Juan, I'm confused by the part of the means of production, this differentiation, the part that is consumed and the part that is not.

JIC: No, the difference between the capital that is employed and the capital that is consumed each time that employment is made is a problem that essentially concerns machinery. Because it makes every means of production whose materiality is not spent entirely in each cycle of production, but serves for several cycles of production, then it seems that what is used is spent entirely in the cycle of production. The raw materials par excellence spend their materiality entirely in each production cycle; The same thing happens with auxiliary materials in general. What is not the case with machinery is that it has a useful life that extends over a series of production cycles.

To have the machinery you have to pay capital, let's say $100, but that machine is going to be used for 100 production cycles. The capital that is being used is $100, but since it is good for 100 cycles, its value is gradually transferred to the value of the product, and what was consumed of that value that the machinery had is only $1. So every time that machine is used, the capital employed is $100 but the capital consumed is $1. That is why he makes that reference to the fact that the natural forces that are objectified in the machinery are available that correspond to $100, but every time they are used, that only costs $1. This is the difference between capital employed and capital consumed.

It has special reference to constant capital. Because variable capital, in principle, is always equal to that consumed to the employee, because labor power is bought and labor power is applied to that production... With this further addition: the capital that was advanced is annihilated in production and is replaced by a new value that did not exist before and that replaces it and regenerates itself. From the point of view of the capitalist, what cost him to dispose of labor power is the value of the worker's labor power, which was in the worker's body. It was bought by the capitalist, and it must be remembered that Marx is always taking the capitalist's capital in order to dispose of the labour power as a capital that is advanced to the worker, and then the worker gives up his labour power. So, there you have that the capital that is consumed in each cycle of production is equal to the capital that was advanced. The same thing happens in raw materials. In auxiliary materials, it depends on whether they are used for more than one production cycle or not. In the practical movements of capital in general, auxiliary materials are considered to be consumed in their entirety each time they are used. The machinery is what makes the difference. One can see that the tools make that difference as well, but where did the growth of constant capital put into raw materials come from faster than variable capital, and then capital put into machinery at the expense of variable capital? It was essentially associated with the development of machinery.

I return to what we have been seeing, and I am going to make a clarification regarding the technical composition. Technical composition relates masses of things that are qualitatively heterogeneous. For on the one hand there is a material mass of means of production, which in itself is heterogeneous, and there is a material mass of living labour. And therefore, it is a relation of magnitude that cannot be terminated, that cannot be expressed quantitatively in given magnitudes. As sometimes it may sound strange to you that it is a relationship of magnitude but

you cannot establish the quantum, I usually use the following for this. If one looks at oneself and asks oneself how much one knew when one first entered formal education, and how much one knows today, it is clear that there is a quantitatively enormous difference. But if one wants to look for a quantitative term, since they are not two homogeneous knowledges, one cannot compare them and obtain a magnitude of how much more one knows now than what one knew at the beginning of schooling. The same goes for the technical composition. And what we're going to have in development, is that in order to be able to... The quantitative expression of the technical composition, it must be mediated, that measurement or the reflection of that change in magnitude, by the composition of value. And then, Marx goes on to propose that there is "a relationship," he says, of "mutual interdependence" between the technical composition and the composition of value. And then, he says that in order to express this relation he is going to give the composition of value, "insofar as it is determined by the technical composition and reflects the changes that have taken place in it, the name of *the organic composition* of capital." [292] And so, he says that when reference is made to the "composition of capital" what is being done is reference to the organic composition of capital.

This has these issues that complicate the relationship. First, there may be changes in the composition of value that do not correspond to changes in the technical composition, and therefore are not changes in the organic composition of capital. In general, when one looks at the capital of a branch, there may be changes in the composition of value that does not change the technical composition. For example, when the same lower-value machinery is incorporated into the branch, technically the machine is the same, the technical composition remains the same, and the value composition changed. But at the same time, when one is going to reflect changes in technical composition as changes in organic composition through changes in the composition of value, in technical composition enters the total mass of means of production, and therefore, what corresponds to the total mass of labor that was applied to the production of those means of production, and the total mass of living labor that is going to be put into operation. But the total mass of living labour does not enter into the composition of value: only variable capital enters.

So, we have to be careful, because when we see changes in the technical composition and we immediately look at them as changes in the composition of value, they can be affected by this leap in the measurement from a computation of the total mass of dead labor and the total mass of live labor, to a computation between constant capital – if it corresponds entirely to the total mass of living labor — and variable capital. which only corresponds to the part of the paid living work. I don't know if these caveats are clear and if I can go ahead or make some other clarification.

Alejandro: I don't know if it's time, but I couldn't catch this last observation you made, and I can't understand what the need to pay attention to this differentiation is, what the problem is.

[292] Ibid., p. 517.

JIC: The problem is this. Here Marx is going to quickly make a clarification on this and we are going to see what general movement he has. But one is saying: we call "changes in organic composition" the changes in the composition of value that reflect changes in technical composition. What one has in front of one is that the two compositions do not encompass the same elements:

- **Technical Comp:** Total mass of dead labour + total mass of paid and unpaid live labour.

- **Comp. of value**: Mass and total value of dead labour + mass of paid live labour.

So, I'm reflecting a change in a certain type of relationship that doesn't have the same components. In what we follow from Volume 1 it will not be relevant, but in the discussions that are taking place regarding what is called the "transformation of values into prices of production" questions will arise around this. But was it understood? I am simply leaving it out.

Alejandro: I understand. One problem that may exist is that the rate of surplus value can increase and that is not reflected in a technical change, let's say.

JIC: The rate of surplus value changes and the variable capital changes, but it does not change the working day, the total mass of labour that is put into operation. So, there is that movement. That when you want to look at what happens with the technical composition as reflected in the changes in the organic composition, you have to be careful that (I'm going to put it in these terms) there is no change in the technical composition. This refers very markedly to movements of capital of certain branches, of a branch. In the total capital of society, normally when there is a change in the rate of surplus value it is because somewhere the technical composition of capital changed that cheapened labor power, and therefore, the technical composition of that total capital changed. I leave it for now, just to take into account that there are going to be discussions around this. [...]

Aristides: Juan, would it be that technical composition is something that one is going to look at within the organic composition, which already has to be given or at least start from that?

JIC: No. The technical composition is not quantifiable by itself, you can't find a term for it because it relates things that are qualitatively different. One could say: I take the technical composition: dead labor with respect to living labor; But that has erased why then the amount of dead labor changes or the amount of live labor changes. So, the way I look at how technical composition evolves... I can't measure quantities of work either, because it's private labor, it's not directly social labor, so I can't recognize it immediately. I need to see how the change in technical composition becomes apparent. To be able to look at it in quantitative terms, I have to mediate it, reflect the change in the technical composition, due to the changes in the composition of value. And then, if I have the technical composition and I have the composition of value [...], the link between the two, Marx is going to put it, is: the changes in the technical composition are the reflection of the changes

in the composition of value. He says: I'm going to call that organic composition. Then I stop at this and the formula that it is going to give of organic composition.

[…] The organic composition, in my opinion, is the reflection of the power that a capital has to be valued. The formula that you are going to present for the organic composition is C/V (constant capital/variable capital). And the higher the organic composition of a capital, the greater its power to produce surplus value. The question that arises is how. If we are going to refer to the capacity of a capital to produce surplus value, in reality, the greater the proportion of variable capital, the greater its power to produce surplus value. So why is the organic composition of capital not V/C? Because what underlies that name is: the more constant capital there is, the higher the productivity of labor, and the higher the productivity of labor, the higher the rate of surplus value. […] Hence a capital of higher organic composition appears to be more powerful in relation to the production of surplus-value, but not simply when one compares it with a capital which has a lower organic composition, but as this organic composition develops, constant capital grows more and more than proportionally in relation to variable capital. And what this entails is an ever-increasing growth in the rate of surplus value. This is what's going to be at stake with the organic composition movement, why it has the formula that it has. I don't know Aristides if...

Aristides: Okay, of course. The question of the productivity of labor appears as a determinant, let's say; In the previous chapter, only the intensity and the day appeared.

JIC: Yes, productivity had already appeared with the question of the growth of constant capital at the expense of variable capital, in the chapter on machinery. But now what we are going to look at is the evolution of these magnitudes.

I return to the title of the section[293]: what is at stake here? It is a relationship between the magnitude of labor power that capital will require with respect to how that capital is composed, what part it has of constant capital and what part it has of variable capital. The first step he is going to take in development is: the proportions remain the same, the organic composition of capital is always the same, and what this implies is that there is no change in the productivity of labor, and then there is no change in the rate of surplus value. Accumulation is sustained by a rate of surplus value that is always the same, and consequently, one could say that there is a simply extensive accumulation of capital. The question was what happens with the demand for labor power and now we put it in relation to this (I am jumping, then we return to the development step by step).

If capital is spread and the relation between constant capital and variable capital is always the same, the technical composition is reflected identical to itself in the composition of value, then the demand for labour-power by capital grows in the same proportion as capital grows, and depends on what portion of capital is applied to accumulation. That is what we have in this point 1. But Marx at this point is putting all the elements that have to be considered, because he could say:

[293] "Growing demand for labor power, with accumulation, the composition of capital remaining the same."

there is no technical change, so the rate of surplus value is the same, and with that look at what happens with the demand for labor power. He puts it from the point of view of the composition of capital, and begins with the simplest determination of the composition of capital: the technical composition of capital is given, it is constant, so what would happen to the demand for labor power? Is it still going on? It's all for thinking about... I complete one thing.

What is Marx going to propose? Well, if one looks at a branch of production, there is a certain productive technique to which it tends. Thus, there may be a certain limited degree of difference in the organic composition of capitals within the same branch. But in the average of the branch, in the whole of the branch, what there is is a given organic composition. And then, if one looks at the whole of the branches of society, there are branches that have different organic compositions, because it depends on the specific technical conditions that are in force in each branch. There are branches where constant capital can have greater weight than variable capital and vice versa. But what is at stake here is to see what happens to the mass of living labor that capital is going to use, it is the total capital of society, which also has an average organic composition that comes out of the average of the organic compositions of the different branches. And since this is the one that matters from the point of view of what happens to the mass of labor power that this capital is going to use as it grows its average organic composition.

And here is a question that I want to emphasize, which makes, again, questions of Volume 3, but that makes the method. As in Volume 3, what Marx stops to look at is what role the different organic composition of each branch plays in the appropriation of surplus value, what is called the "transformation of values into prices of production" and the "transformation of surplus value into average profit", and there is a mountain of discussions about this among Marxists and beyond. And it is very commonly asserted by Marxists that, in Volume 1, Marx assumed that the capitals of all branches had the same organic composition. And what Marx explicitly says is that what he is going to look at is the average, not that they all have the same composition but that he is going to take the average composition because what matters is the social capital.

Logical representation is handled with simplifying assumptions, and so from his point of view, here is a simplifying assumption: they are all the same. And the dialectical development of the necessity of the determinations of the concrete does not make this simplifying assumption to look at what it is going to develop. What it does is say: what I am looking at is the movement of the total capital of society. What happens in each of these branches at this point does not play any role, I do not need to look at it; I realize that it is present, but I do not need to transform this into a simplifying assumption by saying that they are all the same. What I am saying is that it is irrelevant if they are different from each other.

It is with these elements that Marx is going to say: we have already seen these determinations, we are going to begin to look at what happens if we disregard the change in the organic composition of the total capital of society. This makes sense that we start looking at it on Wednesday. But first here we must remember an observation that Marx made at the end of the section on "Absolute Surplus Value",

when he said: we are looking at the fact that commodities are exchanged in proportion to the quantities of labor that are materialized in each of them; Anyone knows that this is not the case, but at this stage of development, trying to explain why they are exchanged on an equal footing as products of capital, not as a simple product of labor, implies skipping a series of developments that still need to be made. We emphasize this with the question of the contradiction that has been unfolding between capital as it was presented to us in circulation, as a mass of value that is valorized without showing any qualitative difference, and what we have been seeing in production, where above all, variable capital, which is the only one capable of valorizing itself (constant capital is inert). Then we saw that constant capital in raw materials grows faster than variable capital, that then constant capital applied to machinery grows at the expense of variable capital...

And now, what we are faced with is that all these differences have to be reflected when we look at the capitals of the different branches according to what organic composition each of them has. Because the one who has more variable capital with respect to its total magnitude, at the same rate of surplus value, will generate more surplus value; and the one that has less variable capital, at the same rate of surplus value, will generate a smaller mass of surplus value. Here we are faced with the development of this contradiction. But at the same time what I said before is happening: we are not yet interested in looking, in the development of this contradiction, at what happens between one branch and another, because what we have to look at is what happens to the total capital of society. And what we already know about the total capital of society is that the organic composition is going to grow with the development of machinery. But to take the first step, let us look at what happens simply with the extensive movement of the total capital of society.

[Doubts about gratuitousness, subject of science, conscience and will...]

Javiera: I listened to the previous class and, if I may, I want to ask a question that is prior to that one, because there was a whole debate there. Aristides spoke, and I also share some of Alexander's doubts that he raised in the last class. [...] It has to do with this difference between capital employed and capital consumed. [...], because there you say that the capital employed, for example, is $100, but the capital consumed is $1. That is why Marx refers to the fact that we have the natural forces that are objectified in the machinery, which correspond to 100$, but every time we use them, we use that little piece, the 1$, for example...

JIC: You use $100 and spend $1.

Javiera: Of course, but I don't understand when it is said that it is disposed of "for free", because that's what it says here in the book, if we already said that the capitalist paid for that machinery, why then when he spends portions of it, that little piece, is it said that the whole body is being disposed of for free, if only a little piece was spent? Why is it said that the totality is disposed of free of charge? of the whole body?

JIC: Here's the thing. Because for me it is not so simply clear, I try to think about why this thing appears that it is appropriated for free, because the capitalist effectively made the disbursement buying the machinery. I understand that the point of view, in what sense can it be that the capitalist has "free" access to the natural forces whose control is objectified in the machinery, what you were saying, is simply that the machine has it intact, always, and in this case we were talking about a machine that is going to use it 100 times complete, and every time he uses it it will only cost him 1. So, you have 100 times of the complete machine, and when you add it up, how much did it cost you to have the entire machine a hundred times? It cost him 100, but he had 100, 100, 100... a hundred times he had a hundred. I don't know if it's clear. I make it easier because I don't know how to do those math.

Javiera: That is clear, what does not seem so clear to me is that it is free [...]. Because before he was referring to the gratuitous in relation to nature, right?

JIC: The "before", if I remember correctly, is several chapters before, it is the chapter of the machinery where that same observation appears.

Javiera: Ah, well, then it's not free.

JIC: It depends on how you look at it. I'm going to make it easier because 100*100 is harder to multiply. But let's say that it is a machine that is worth $10 and that it is good for 10 productions. What does this imply? The capitalist had the machine that is worth $10, 10 times. How much did it cost you to have that machine that is worth $10, 10 times? Only $10. It means that instead of having to pay $100, 10*10 to have the machine, $90 of that $100 was free.

I have discussed it with myself many times; In some recordings I must say that this is not the case, because of the fact that the machine is paid, but sometimes it jumps out at me and sometimes it doesn't, and I understand that it is this sense. The capitalist has at his disposal a natural wealth, natural forces that are objectified in the machinery, entirely every time he uses it. So each time you have 10, but each time you use it it only costs you $1. After 10 times he used the machine, he had something worth $100 for which he only had to pay $10. And consequently he had this attribute that the machine has for free. In contrast to, for example, raw materials, because he has 10, and every time he uses them he spends $10 and has to go and replace it. On the other hand, the machine does not have to go to replace it because it did not wear it out. He has the entire machine and only spends a little bit.

Javiera: Of course, but what you just said is a little bit different, because one thing, and I agree with that, is that the capitalist has the entire machine, because obviously he couldn't occupy a little bit if you didn't have the whole machine. I mean, what is the little piece without the whole machine?

JIC: That is the materiality of the machine. The machine has to be materially intact.

Javiera: Of course, but adding the "free" thing doesn't convince me. I would have to look now at what you tell me about what you are referring to about the chapter on machinery, but for example, if we go two pages earlier and you talk about this nature thing, it is different, although I also still have doubts about the "gratuitousness" of the elements of nature, because they are not elements that were the product of human work. But this is kind of weird.

JIC: That is the explanation I can tell you of the term "free". If I have to explain it, not accompanying Marx's development, but in general, I prefer not to put it in those terms. But I understand, when I try to answer why he puts the term in it, that this is a sense in which he could have the term. I use 10 times and it only costs me once. So, the remaining 10 times I used it for free. Put upside down, I say. I have to get it back in one move. In practice this is done per year, but in the last cycle of the useful life of the machinery, in the machinery, there is only 1/10 of the value left, in this example. And 100% of the use value remains. So I'm using something that is worthwhile, and that... There is a problem here depending on how one strictly looks at it.

It is true that the capitalist has to keep what is returned from the capital as he spends the machine so that this capital that begins to be, for example, $10 of machine, $0 of money (when the machine is newly bought). The following year or cycle becomes $9 pesos per machine, $1 of money, $8 of machine, $2 of money... $1 machine, $9 money. The capitalist can dispose (with the development of the credit system this takes concrete forms, and so on), in principle, of that $1 of money, because he will not need it for nine cycles. And then, when I did the analysis of economic cycles, of accumulation, I did this situation.

Let's consider that instead of having 1 machine, you have 10 of these machines. It means that in year 1 he has $100 in machine, $0 in money. In year 2, since he spent 10% of 10 machines, he has $10 in money, $90 in the body of the machine. With that $10 he can buy a machine (let's dispense with the fact that he also needs more capital, variable capital to make it work). He still has a capital of $100, but now instead of having 10 machines he has 11 machines. And after the next cycle you have $10 in money again. Their machines are worth $80, plus... I don't remember if I had to add the machine to this additional one. Well, and so it goes until in the end, with a period of 10, you have 21 machines with the same capital. And here comes the moment when the first 10 die. So, the cycle at that time its scale of production is going to fall. Its scale of production is going to fall from 21 to 11, but it still has a capital of 100, and now it has eleven machines.

Well, I don't think that's what Marx is looking at when he says that he has the machinery "free", but in this case all the machines he has since the first ten died, he bought them with... Let's put it like this: while it has 11, 12, 13, 14, 15..., the 11th, 12th, 13th... are free for him. Then when he has 11 left, he had to put in the $100, but he has 1 full that is free, and he moves again in the same time. I say again: for me the meaning that Marx gives it is that the capitalist has a material body that is worth $100 and has that material body that is worth $100, spending only $1 each time he uses it. That would be equivalent to (I am going to risk, it may be nonsense, but suppose it were): why can't the same be said of the worker? Why does he not dispose of the worker's labour-power for free, and yet, at the same time, with the worker (not with the machine) there is a part of the working day unpaid?

Javiera: Because it is spent in its entirety. Or not?

JIC: And because it lasts longer than the necessary time. During the surplus-labour part, the labour-power of the labourer is at his disposal free of charge. I don't know if there is a similarity in saying: in order to dispose of the worker's labor power for free, he has to pay him what that labor power is worth. To have the machinery for free, you have to spend what is necessary so that, when the useful life of the machinery is over, you can replace it. But in the meantime, it continues to be used in its entirety, despite the fact that it is being spent. I don't know if it's very... moreover, variable capital has a completely different form of rotation from that of constant capital: variable capital is annihilated, a new value appears; In the case of constant capital, particularly machinery, nothing, it only transfers its value to the value of the product. I don't know... I don't have any more answer. I don't know if there is anything more from last time and if they want me to return to half of zero or to try to move forward.

Javiera: I have a small doubt from last time. It is when he says that capital incorporates "social progress" for free, carried out "behind the back of its old form". Are you referring to science?

JIC: There are also things that underlie observation, and that one can say: well, this refers to that, and that's why... When we look at who is the subject of scientific production, Marx says that capital gratuitously appropriates the knowledge of others, of the science of others, but it never manages to define who is the concrete

subject of that scientific production. He clearly says that it is not the capitalists who are the subjects of scientific production, of that he has no doubt, but he does not appear. And besides, in what we are seeing, if we stick rigorously to the development that appears so far in *Capital*, what happens to the workers is that the development of capital is mutilating the productive attributes that they had, it takes away their control over the unity of their labor process as individual organs of the collective worker. it condemns them to repetitive tasks... To the point that Marxist authors such as Braverman appear, who say: only if an individual does repetitive work, empty of meaning, over which he has no control, without creativity, only in that case is he a member of the working class. That it is taken from looking up to that point and not thinking that the problem is not to interpret texts, but to look at the concrete movement of the life of society using Marx's development as a weapon and as a guide. Then the affirmation that he appropriates social knowledge gratuitously appears ambiguous.

There is a more restricted sense. It is clear that the new machinery produced is going to benefit the capitalist who makes pens, but it is not produced by the capitalist who makes pens, but by the capitalist who makes the machinery. And then, the capitalist who makes the pens appears appropriating an extraordinary surplus value because he sells below the social value but above the individual value, benefiting from the technical, scientific development made by another subject that is not him. Now, what happens in the concrete movement? There are several transformations here. This is valid as long as the capitalist who uses the machine is not the same one who produces it. But what happens? And at some time, in some aspects... I say: in the textile industry it is clear that the weaving machine is not produced by a textile capitalist, he does not have the means to produce it. It may participate in what improvements can be made to it, but it cannot produce it itself. But as capital becomes more and more popular... What we have seen so far is that each individual capital needs to make a larger and larger mass of money, and it may be that in that larger mass of money, the way to compete with the rest is that the textile capitalist also has the factory to make weaving machines, to make looms. But let's take it that way. What happens in practice when there is this division between a capitalist who makes the technical innovation and another who is the one who is going to use the machine in which that technical innovation is objectified?

The capitalist who makes the machine, what he is going to say to the capitalist who is going to use it is: this is the source of profits, of extraordinary surplus value for you. I'm not going to give it to you, what I'm going to do is: let's share. The price of this machine is not simply the value of this machine, it has incorporated a part of the extraordinary surplus value, which cannot be realized with the sale of the machine, but it will be realized with the sale of the product that was produced with the machine. I don't know if we had talked about it when we saw the machinery or not, all this has a lot to do with the material form that the development of machinery has. While producing the machinery and innovation in the machinery required a whole amount of development work, for a machine that was not going to be used by the capitalist who produced the machinery, it was for another capitalist from another branch to use, what appears is that the capitalist who made the machinery is going to ask the capitalist who is going to use it, to cede a part of

the extraordinary surplus value. He is not going to ask for it, do you understand? He's not going to say, "You have to give me this." What he's going to say is: this machine, which is going to allow you to win so much, isn't worth $100, it's worth $120. So it's going to allow you, instead of making an extraordinary $100, you're going to make $80, and the other part is mine. Because, in addition, the capitalist who sells the machine earns it in one go, because it is worth the full price of the machine, while the capitalist who is going to use it will only have extraordinary surplus value as he uses it, and in the long run it will disappear, so for that capitalist, The problem is not paying for the machine, so much so that when the extraordinary surplus value disappears it has not yet paid the surcharge.

Well, and to make looms you have to have a loom factory, where you can reverse engineer and buy a loom, disassemble it and with each piece of this loom, it goes to the tooling shop so that they make all the pieces the same, and bye. And from now on anyone can have... Not just anyone can produce a loom that is a source of extraordinary surplus value, because you have to do all this in the middle, you have to have a factory afterwards to assemble the loom. But when innovation starts to be... The machine is robotized, and the innovation is not simply that the compressed air outlet is a little twisted to one side, which gives it more speed or the thread does not get tangled, but the problem is that there is a computer system that regulates the machine and that if one appropriates the computer system, the only thing that costs him is to copy it.

One of the marked transformations in the legal forms of machinery development is that the question of intellectual property appears much more rigidly than in the nineteenth century (when it already existed). Because now the one who develops the most productive machine is not even the one who manufactures it, what he does is sell the source of technical innovation to one who manufactures it, and that source is easily appropriated. So, this whole question appears, where the argument... (and now I come to what Marx says about society), those of vaccines do the same: what does the individual capitalist say? I took the risk, so now it can't be that everyone... I put capital for this, and it is a capital that could have lost everything, and in fact more than one lost everything he had put in. So, this cannot be made available by any other capital that is going to have an extraordinary surplus value by selling this that... Then the reality is that a large part of this development is financed by national states, so they did not put their own weight, but private property is the general form.

So, all this changed strongly from the time of Marx to here. But I return to the fact that, from the point of view of the individual capitalist (I do not know whether this is the meaning Marx gives it or not), this availability of the machine that has an innovation, assuming that it costs him nothing, or that even if it costs him more, it is a source of extraordinary surplus value for him, is not the product of his own labor. he benefits from something that society has done, a third party. This is the first sense in which one can say that, when the new machine comes, the capitalist who is going to use it is benefiting from the development of science made by society.

[...] In Volume 1 of *Capital* there is no worker with a scientific conscience, beyond the maintenance workers who say that they are artisans with some scientific conscience. In Volume 3, but linked to circulation, there are workers who cannot be said to have a scientific conscience either, who do occupy the role of the capitalist and what he is going to propose are workers who know languages, how to do accounts, how to write... But it is clear that this is far from what today would be called a scientific conscience. In The *Grundrisse*, which predates capital, the drafts of the Contribution, he has a sentence at the point where there is a whole development with respect to the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, which is very different from the one in the immediacy, in Volume 1.

What Marx proposes is that with the development of accumulation, with the multiplication of social wealth, the working population must grow, but the population "in general" must also grow because the development of science is necessary. So, the first thing that appears is a contrast between the working population and the population in general, where the workers seem not to be included. And something I'm debating... It is the weakness that the vaccine produces in me, I am going to break my rules; the same is true, when we get to Volume 3... In a place where he has been talking, not about this in particular, but suddenly, in a little piece that he has, he says: we must distinguish between "collective work" and "general work". And then what he is going to say is: general work is all work, all invention, all discovery (I don't remember if he says it that way, the word) "scientific" is there. So, when he says "the population in general", the question is whether he is not referring to the population that carries that scientific consciousness, but appears separate from the working population. And that's the place where... I suppose you have heard it mentioned, because many of those who have spoken of the last few times speak of the "general intellect", it is taken from there, it is the "general intellect"; that, precisely because of these things that you have been saying, it is not just any intellectual work despite what individuals like Negri and Lazzarato think, the work of advertising... Intellectual work, the "general intellect," with this definition he has given of general human labor, is scientific labor. One can think that advertising is part, it is done scientifically, but to think that this is the development of objective consciousness and not the development of ideology is an abstraction. In any case, it plays a role in the development of the unity between production and social consumption within the capitalist mode of production.

But well, with these caveats and these proposals... not only in this part of *Capital*, but also in the *Grundrisse*, does this ambiguity appear. And many times, instead of saying that it satisfies a need of capital, it appears (we saw it when the struggle for the duration of the working day appeared) that it is society that reacts. And there society is abstracted from its specific determination. Society is the personification of capital, it is not an abstract need of society, it is a need of capital. As long as capital can continue to reproduce, annihilating nature and human beings, it does so. When their own movement begins to collide with this annihilation, ideological, political and scientific expressions appear that show that the clash is taking place. Now: they are not born on the margins of capital, they are ways of expressing the unity of the movement of capital. But Marx uses these terms like this.

You should have asked him why he puts it this way. We talked about the historical moment in which he wrote, what he could see about the working class as a subject. I do not remember whether it is in the prologue the first edition or the postface to the second, it says that it is written for the German working class, and in a much earlier work it says that the bourgeois philosophical spirit has died, and that it has been reborn in the German working class; with which, he is thinking of a working class that has the capacity for thought... in the case of philosophy, no, but in the case of science, yes, objective thought. In the case of philosophy, abstract thought, which requires a whole complex development of consciousness. Well, that's how he's putting it.

Since I violated my principles (here I behaved like Groucho Marx and not like Karl Marx: these are my unwavering principles, but if you don't like them I have these others)... Why can one think that scientific work, objective knowledge, is human work in general? And here "general" is not synonymous with "universal", it is what corresponds to gender. And what have we been seeing of the human race? In what way does the human race differ from the animal species at first? Simply because of a difference in degree in the complexity with which it is capable of transforming nature into a means for itself, it is a quantitative difference. This quantitative difference is reflected as a qualitative difference with the development of the productive forces of labor that is being carried, is taking shape in the development of human knowledge, science. And when we now say that human labor and human beings are no longer simply differentiated from animal species by the scale with which they transform their environment into a means for themselves, now what we have is the way in which they make the transformation: they govern this expenditure of their labor power consciously and voluntarily. And that's why we said that he is the subject of his own history.

Since consciousness and will are the product of the development of the productive forces of human labor, it is the engendering of its generic being. But what we had now is that human labor is already generically different from any productive activity of a living species. And yet, at the same time, it continues to have an attribute that makes it equal to animal productive activity. The animal has to spend a part of its body to apply that expenditure to the immediate appropriation of the environment and transform it into a means for itself. When one looks at human work with the development of consciousness and will, what is in front of one is manual labor. And manual labor has this same character: you have to spend a portion of the body, apply it to the tool so that the tool operates on the object of work and transforms it. It is the same as the monkey that sucks a stick and puts it in the anthill so that the ants stick together. It does exactly the same thing.

I do not call animal productive activity "work," but it is productively spending its body, governed by a knowledge that is not conscious and voluntary, which is complex knowledge. Well, this is the same as a manual worker does, except that the manual worker does this by organizing and applying that expenditure of his body on the tool so that the tool operates on the work object and transforms it. When one looks at the development of machinery, what appears is a work that is present before, but that does not have the degree of development that it has with

machinery, which is the work of developing the ability to control natural forces, to objectify that control in machinery; and, if one looks at it with regard to the unity of social production and consumption, the movement of social relations, in order to know objectively—and therefore to be able to carry out by conscious and voluntary action—the organization of this process. Then, human labor began to have a form that is no longer materially assimilable in any respect to animal productive activity; Because the tool is no longer in the hands of the worker, the tool is part of an automatic mechanism, it is automatically discharged on the object of work, so that it transforms the materiality of the object of work.

What is the basis for the development of machinery? What is Marx going to say? Practical knowledge is the knowledge of manual work, the development of the ability to handle the tool can only be acquired by working, and it is carried in the subjectivity of the individual who developed that knowledge. What is it that appears here? The separation of that knowledge from the person's body. What he is going to propose as typical of the development of large-scale industry is the development of science, it is this intellectual work. That work is absolutely different from any form of animal labor. And that is why (this is what I reproduce from what Marx says, I do not pretend that this is what Marx proposed, but he tells me this and makes me think, and subject it to criticism as to whether this is not) is that when he speaks of intellectual work, of science and of inventions as generic human work, and when he says that the human being is in the process of transforming all of nature into a means for himself, and even when this term appears that "capital freely appropriates the science of others", "nature" and so on; What is present for me is how the human being, in the capitalist mode of production, is fully becoming a generic being in which there is nothing left of the immediate form of animal productive activity. [...]

Alejandro: On the last thing you mention, I don't know if when there is this question of advancing the development of the productive forces under the specific social form that is capital, it is the substantial step towards the generic being, or if that substantial step was already taken from the beginning, from the moment that the human being begins to have functionalities in tools, that can use different forms to appropriate the environment in its diversity, and that is what is mentioned in the machinery, the development of that very thing. I don't know if I understand myself.

JIC: I don't know if I followed you. But while the tool is manual, human productive activity needs to apply the immediate expenditure of the body on the tool to transform the object. When the work is done with the machine, the tool is part of an automatic mechanism, the human arm no longer intervenes. The only thing that intervenes (in absolute terms) is human consciousness, it is what is proper to human knowledge. And if one looks at the processes of robotization, etc., more and more human work is separated from the direct handling of the tool. Marx, I don't remember where exactly, says: he is capable of making all of nature function as his arm, as his organ. Now: for nature to function as its own organ, outside of that organ, there should be no direct intervention of other human organs.

Javiera [Chat]: That's in the *Manuscripts* of '44.

JIC: Well, thank you, because I never remember where anything is.

Alejandro [Chat]: But in the production of the tool there is no longer a moment of the generic human being?

JIC: I don't say no. Yes, the human being is generically differentiated, as a genus, from any animal species. First, because of the scale of transformations, second, because it produced voluntary conscious knowledge for itself and now organizes its productive action consciously and voluntarily, something that no other living subject does. But, I say: it still resembles the productive activity of animal species. Therefore, it has a common attribute with animal species. Now, human labor as "intellectual" labor (a term that I don't like very much, but hey, it's what is used and there are reasons..., Hegel has some criticism somewhere, but later he still uses it) has nothing of the work of an animal species. It has a materially different form, because the work of the animal species is also organized with its knowledge, but then – let's put it this way – it has to "put its feet" in the process of appropriating the environment.

With the "intellectual" work and the objectification of that knowledge in the machinery, the human being has to do the same work that the animal does, organizing, knowing, knowing himself in his condition as a subject, but he does not put his hands anywhere. So, this is what appears as the full development of a genus different from any animal species. Then the ecologists and naturalists catch me and they are going to come and cook for me, but for me it encompasses this generic condition. Marx gives it the name of "general human labor ," because it is the labor proper to the human race.

Javiera: But why would he be separated from the working class?

JIC: No, that's how it appears in Marx. I argue that no, that it is the opposite: it is the working class that bears the development of this general work, but Marx separates it. One can think of hypothetical reasons, which is totally idle; Because what one has to do is look at this statement: Can I recognize it in the reproduction of the concrete in front of me? Is this so or not? I look at myself as a member of the working class as the bearer of scientific consciousness and I say: I have the attributes of being a seller of labor power, the only commodity I have to sell is my labor power, etc., I recognize myself in my process of reproduction as an organ of capital. And I say: I am the bearer of this. So, when I get to that point, I don't recognize myself in the development that is put there, in a worker without scientific knowledge, in a growth of the working population, but also of the population in general. I don't see that differentiation; In any case, it should be the growth of the working population that does the general work, but could there be a working population that does not do the general work? Or is this the full movement of the development of the generic being? So, I could say: why could Marx put it that way?

And I look at what appears in Volume 1 that he has no scientific knowledge, and one of the things that can lead one to think the reasons is that it is true, the English working population, the most developed working class in the world at the time, were all illiterate. I think I have already said it once, sometimes it gives the impression that Marx looks at conditions that are a little earlier than when he is writing. And then, when in 1820, the *English population* as a whole—the working-class population was even worse—had two years of formal schooling... That is an illiterate population. It is very difficult to say that these subjects who are massively illiterate have with them the potential to be the subjects of scientific production. At the same time, what appears to him... (It may be that he did not see them as workers, that may also appear). Adam Smith was a salesman of labor power, Ricardo was not, Malthus was not, Malthus was a representative of the Anglican church, and the Anglican church was the principal or one of the principal landowners. And if one looks at who appears as the figures of technical innovation, they appear very much as the product of the work of an individual who, in general, was not a member of the working class. With working days of 14-16h, 12h later, 5 days a week, it is very difficult for an individual to develop his scientific consciousness, despite the fact that the political organizations of the working class, the trade union organizations, always strongly promoted the development of education in general, and of the workers who were part of these organizations.

So, you look at this, and it may appear as something that you can't finish resolving. In Volume 3 he sees workers with knowledge of languages, which requires a whole development of educational training, and he sees them capable of organizing the movement of capital. And there will come a time when it will appear... in fact, something Smith himself had seen. Because Smith, when he starts to explain profit, says that it is not a manager's salary, because you can hire someone to do it and pay a salary. And he also says that it does not depend on whether it involves a lot of work or little work, with which, Smith himself is already seeing that there is... But he does not see him as a member of the working class, because he has to talk about the workers, that individual who could receive the salary of management does not even figure, the worker lives... in Ricardo's case, the natural price of labor is the subsistence wage. In Smith there is an ambiguity that he can be above, but Ricardo directly does not...

If one looks at a large part of the intellectuals who appear in the contemporary movement with Marx and others, Marx himself and Engels himself do not come from the working class even through the covers. Neither Proudhon, nor Lassalle, who was... here we would call it a "package", I don't know if you understand it. He was so packet that he died in a duel over an issue around a woman's bond. And that was done by the nobility, the working class did not fight a duel. The bourgeoisie itself doubtfully fought a duel. Marx recognizes Wolff, to whom he dedicates Volume 1 of *Capital*, as a member of the working class. Now: Wolff was apparently a militant, he was not one of the intellectuals in this whole development of the discussion about how the life of society was organized, which is the general social relation, the capitalist mode of production. So, one can venture... and it's irrelevant, maybe he had completely different reasons...

Luis Denari in his biography of Marx, unfortunately interrupted, has some proposals that I do not fully share with respect to these areas with which Marx was related and the reasons why he was related. Marx and Engels were the intellectuals within those realms, and in general, especially in the beginning, there was not... I don't know what the others were, the most massive members, I suppose that there were workers there but they appeared much more with roles in the leadership, not referring to the intellectual orientation that I am talking about... One of those who appears with a remarkable situation, of contrast, I think it is Durkheim, the one who has the study on suicide, who was a manual worker, and from his condition as a manual worker he developed the ability to ask himself the questions of the social bond and so on. I don't remember if it was Lenin who made the proposal about Durkheim. Lenin was not a seller of labor power either, Trotsky was not a seller of labor power... Then objective barriers appear to the possibility of recognizing... At the same time that he is being seen and recognized, to be able to integrate that subject with what is being said about him, because it is said of him that he is the bearer of this, and at the same time to come across that and not be able to finish closing it... But well, this is what I wonder about why it could be that these appear... If I remember correctly, Lenin reproaches him for getting into a lot of discussions with those he shouldn't and for wasting his time arguing with these people instead of stopping to study more about what is important. He says that about someone, I don't remember if it's Durkheim.

Alejandro [Chat]: Is the absolute knowledge that appears in Hegel the idealist inversion with respect to this process of formation of the human generic being that is advancing in the scientific appropriation of the environment that we are seeing using Marx?

JIC: You should have asked Luis Denari more than me, who could have answered it, because in reality I was from Hegel... I was never interested in idealistic forms, but I was interested in the structure of the method, which for me was not inverted, it was placed in the right unless one thought that first the form is generated, then the content and then the unity between the form and the content in thought.

For me, first one is confronted with the form one wants to know, one wonders about its necessity, and that questioning, that analysis, confronts one with the content; and once one has deployed the determinations of the content, now what is in front of one is the need to answer why that content necessarily has the form it has. I read very late... [...] the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, because in some way it is the process of analysis. And I had no problem with the analysis process, I had a lot of problem with going back to the concrete form. And the development which appears in the *science of logic*, just as it begins in what Hegel understands to be the simplest determination, is all the time advancing in the development of concrete forms.

Having made this clarification, I could say yes and no, I would have to think much more about it to answer. Because this scientific knowledge is not an absolute knowledge, it is a concrete knowledge: it is knowing the determinations of the concrete object on which one is going to act, and therefore it is the knowledge of the condition of concrete subject. That's why I would say no. Why would you say

yes? Because when Hegel looks at the human being (perhaps he is saying nonsense), the human being is the objectification of that absolute knowledge. The problem that the human being has for Hegel up to this point is that he does not recognize himself as such an objectification, he looks at it as if it were something external, and in reality it is the human being himself in his unfolding. And in that case, the answer may be "yes." I can't answer more than that, and I'm not going to lie by saying that I'm going to think about it, because I'm not going to think about it. This does not answer what I need to answer. Are you, Alejandro?

More unfortunately, not simply because of Luis's death, but also because the last 2 or 3 years he had been working very hard, he had already written about Marx's relationship with Hegel, and he began to work very strongly on Hegel, and he had planned to rewrite part of what he had already written. And now we are going to see what he left as drafts, but I got the impression that deep down, what we talked about, he had not finished pouring it over. I suppose it will have many notes, but I don't know if they can be structured as a text, especially in relation to Marx. But hey, we'll see how far he was able to give full shape to what he was working on. Already in recent years at some point he was indignant with Hegel, because he said that after raising this issue of the human being and absolute knowledge, he wrote an article about the virtues of the German monarchy, and after explaining that this was the idea that was objectified and the human being was the bearer, the objectification of the idea, ended up saying a string of about what was happening in his contemporary Germany. And it was a strong concern of Luis, how was it possible that an individual who had the capacity to elaborate a development of the enormous complexity that Hegel had developed, and when he saw an immediate concrete form, he could not even associate it with what he had in front of him, with its construction, he could not recognize it as an expression of what he was proposing that it was, let us call it, the unity of the phenomenon that was in front of me. But hey.

Alejandro: He never stopped being a philosopher.

JIC: Well, it is. But Luis was indignant because he said: it can't be that... Because if I were a guy who says four stupid things about what happens in life, let's say... [...]. If he had been one of those individuals who wrote speeches to Macri, one would say that it was because he did not stop being a philosopher, but an individual without a doubt of an extraordinary mind, at a time, with instruments to know much more... Maybe that favored him and didn't disturb him, but how was he able to see what was in front of him, and even if he couldn't accept how he was in that determination...? Perhaps because he could not accept himself as that alienated subjectivity, because he saw himself as a human being, as the existence of the whole... [...] I already have the name: Rozitchner Jr., advisor to the former president of the nation, but he teaches online courses and workshops on writing, philosophy, Nietzsche, and other topics of thought.

Javiera: Hey, I don't know who it is but... you killed him! [Laughter.]

Alejandro: Nietzschean had to be.

JIC: The father was an intellectual 10 long years older than me, who was in Paris in 1968, and he was one of those Marxist philosophers linked to the development of these approaches increasingly based on the free human spirit. He was a professor of social sciences, and I think in philosophy and letters. A guy with a lot of authority within the Marxism of those lines, and as far as I know he had two sons: one who is a younger guy than me, 50-60 around, and the other when he was ... I don't remember if he's 80-something or 90 years old, so he's a little boy. He died not too long ago. And with these things that happen, and that one can never know what is going to happen with respect to one's own children, the opposite came out to him – at least formally – of what the old man was: ultra-liberal. I mean: you can't be too rigorous and be a philosopher of that tenor that appeared there, but he was an individual who wrote books, who had a whole school of his own, and the son is a scoundrel who sells this that appeared there, and ultra-liberal. I suppose that his father must not have been very amused, but since he is almost a neighbor of mine, sometimes when I walk around the neighborhood I come across him.

We leave these ramblings aside [...]. How do we continue? I get the impression that going into organic composition at this point doesn't make much sense if it produced so many discussions last time, and now we're going to have 15 minutes to develop, so we can keep doing like Rozitchner and go on rambling. And I clarify that we are trying to do the opposite, not to ramble.

Alejandro: A question pending from when we finished the previous chapter, and that also comes, in part, from your presentation. It appeared at the beginning of the workshop and I intervened, you gave me an answer that at the time closed me a little, but now the question appears again, and it is this affirmation that no one can produce the conscience of another. To what extent is this so, insofar as the worker's own human life is subordinated as an attribute of capital? And then, this question of childhood, that when one produces food for the other, shelters him, is producing that other, when he punishes him he is also producing it... In childhood it becomes more evident to me, but I understand that this extends a little more, and that concrete action carried out by a father, a mother, a sibling, the immediate ties within the family bond, would be, therefore, mediations of being that attribute of capital. […] As far as I am confronted, I now understand that there can be a production of the consciousness of another, but it is not an abstract production but is subordinated to being that attribute.

JIC: All that you described that one individual does for another, that is social labor. Operating in the process in which another individual produces his consciousness is a part of social labor. Particularly in the case of teachers, that is the essence of that social labor of operating in the process in which other individuals produce their consciousness. I operate in that process and I am producing that individual as a human being through my work, but when I say that consciousness cannot be produced, it is not that this individual does not think for himself and is not conscious for himself. He thinks what he thinks as a product of social labor, but that is how he organizes his own individual activity, and when he has to organize his own individual activity, when the time comes to execute his own individual activity, others cannot move his arm to make the movement he has

to make. What I want to emphasize with that is the image that Miley is coming from... Sorry also for Xatan, because Javiera already suffers from it but she comes... what is the name of yours, the one who was a candidate for president and almost left?

Javiera: Kast?

JIC: Kast. So, there is a mass of the working population (I am not going to say "surplus", because it has not appeared so far) that cannot reproduce its labor power, and that repeats what this individual says. And it's not that this other individual, that's not an expression of his own consciousness that he produced for himself. And this leads to the other aspect: of course consciousness is determined, it has a mass of determinations: from biological, organic, to determinations... It is a concrete form that carries the general social relation: I do not produce the consciousness that I want. When I produce my consciousness for myself, what I do is to be the expression of all those determinations, a large part of which I have incorporated as a product of social labor, of others. But I cannot say, "I am the victim of my conscience": I am the subject of my consciousness. And it is very important to me to emphasize it.

I always stressed this in the courses, because the subject of the learning process is not the teacher. The teacher operates in that process, but when one argues with them, one is full of teachers who think that they are the subjects of the process because they think that they are the ones who produce the student's consciousness. And the subject of this process of consciousness production is the student. Even more so when what one is proposing is a consciousness that is sustained by a knowledge that has the form of a reproduction of the concrete through thought. So, the way to appropriate what others say to incorporate it as a product of one's own conscience, is that one has to take the path that others are supposed to tell them they have done and subject it to criticism. The denial of that is conviction. That is also why, I don't know if I said it, in the USSR... It is clear that one can convince another individual, which means that the other individual wanted to incorporate into his consciousness what one was telling him, and incorporated it uncritically. Instead of reproducing it for himself, he accepted what the other told him, and it must be so because "the other will know", because "the other is serious"... And that is the etymological meaning of convincing: I overcome the resistance that the other is putting up on me along with the other. So, it is in this sense that I say that each one produces his own consciousness as a product of social labor.

Alejandro: Yes, I have more doubts in fact, now.

JIC: You know that my goal is always to sow doubts and not to convince, so... [Laughs].

Alejandro: In part I agree with what you propose, but in part I don't, because it seems to me that some mediation is missing in that approach. You give the example of the university student, and there it is clear to me, it is more evident – although sometimes not so much – that one finds adult individuals who are immediately carriers of that critical consciousness. Not in the necessary quantity,

but it is found. But that subject who has the capacity to produce his consciousness, from what moment does he have it, from the moment he is born?

JIC: When one is born one has no consciousness, in the first place, because it is a form of knowledge that requires a whole development individually. What normal people don't have at age six is the ability to develop a scientific consciousness. I say, the theory of relativity, to give an absurd example: it is clear that it has not yet developed that capacity. Now: why is he going to develop this capacity? Because he lives in a society where this capacity is a condition for selling one's own labor power to a certain type of worker. Consciousness is developing, it is transforming. When I told you last time about something that is a quantitative determination, but that has no end, that therefore you cannot establish quantitative relationships, it is knowledge, consciousness. It is clear that the same individual at 30 years of age knows much more than he did at five or six years of age, but it is immeasurable how much he knows, qualitatively what he knows is different – to go to the subject of organic composition. But this is it.

I posed it very early on: the question is always how that consciousness is determined. But every properly human action is a conscious and voluntary action, consequently, it is governed by the consciousness of that individual, it is not governed by something other than the consciousness of that individual. The question is how that consciousness is determined. I did, I suppose, the example of the defense of rapists, who say that the victim did not resist, so she actually consciously agreed to the rape. And the question one has is: of course he agreed consciously, but that awareness was determined: he had a knife to his neck. And so, it is a decision, a consciousness that is inseparable from its determinations. Everything can be explained by consciousness and will, and therefore nothing can be explained by consciousness and will itself. Alejandro, I don't know if... I'm glad I left you with more questions.

Alejandro: Okay. I am facing a concrete question that is linked to what you mentioned about Durkheim, and the question about the determinations of consciousness that lead the person to that concrete action that is to end oneself is very present. So I need to answer all possible aspects of that in order to have at least one development.

Xatan: John, but you have said that everything is determined by consciousness and will, and at the same time that nothing is determined by consciousness and will. What do you mean by that?

JIC: Every conscious and voluntary human action, obviously, can be explained by the conscience of the will: he hit the one who crossed him in the street because he voluntarily felt like it; he began to study because he consciously decided that he was studying. Properly human action is always a conscious and voluntary action, so I can explain all human action through consciousness and will: he did it because he wanted to, because his conscience told him that he had to do it. The problem I have is that, just as I can explain everything, I can't really explain.

Xatan: Of course, because it is not an arbitrary will.

JIC: Exactly. What I have to explain is how that consciousness and that will is determined, and then I have to ask myself about the social being of that subject, and that is where I am going to try to answer why his consciousness and his will... And when it comes to one's own subjectivity, one tries to answer it until one reaches that point. When it is a question of an alien subjectivity, one can sometimes interrupt that answering oneself at a certain level by saying: well, since this is the way to govern one's own action, it is only the individual that can be answered. But when it comes to one's own action (one tries, I mean, it does not mean that one happily achieves it, is clear about it, far from it), the first thing that one makes one wonder about the determinations of one's own conscience and one's own will, if one wants to perform an action that goes beyond the appearance of being conscious and voluntary. And the problem that one has is that one has to ask oneself to the point where the concrete action that one is facing can account for why one is facing the need for that concrete action, and why, at the same time, one has the potentialities to give one's action a different form. if that concrete action contains, it appears as the negation of... (it is half abstract, because it is the same subjectivity), of conscious and voluntary subjectivity. That is knowledge, action itself.

Xatan: But not an absolute negation, that is, in the end the will continues to mediate. Even if there is content that is showing general, social determinations, if there is no will in any way... The will has to mediate through this society, right?

JIC: The will always mediates. I'm going to take the absurd example of the resolution I had to make today: do I get vaccinated or not (now that they have called to vaccinate people my age in particular)? With the experience of... No scientist could clarify to me what the vaccine was, but none could rule out that it was the vaccine, which caused me a heart problem that I did not have until that moment. So, I could have solved this situation by saying: well, I'm going and getting vaccinated. And I would have done it voluntarily, and my conscience would have said: it doesn't matter, if you have an episode like that again, bad luck. And my action is going to be a conscious and voluntary action, with a consciousness and a will that stopped at the appearance that in reality, it is a problem of luck.

In the misfortune of having a more scientific conscience, it makes one wonder: let's see if I can guide my luck, see if it goes better or worse. So, I contacted the cardiologist who sees me regularly, and I asked him what he was doing, also suggesting (because doctors do not remember who the patient is, as he recently gave me an antiarrhythmic that he later took out) if it was not convenient for me to take the antiarrhythmic. And the guy told me to get vaccinated and to take the antiarrhythmic. And I don't know if the other time he caught me three or four days after getting vaccinated, which is the time that can produce the effect. I voluntarily went to get vaccinated with all the doubt of saying: what the fuck am I...? On top of that, I had an hour and a half to think about it, that I had to be waiting. And well, it is an action that, I knew the determinations up to that point, I was satisfied with that knowledge of the determinations, I had references from other doctors, I only had the reference of one who told me "Don't get vaccinated, wait a couple more

months", I had the reference of two infectologists who said "You have to get vaccinated now"...

That is a conscious and voluntary action. But anyone who looks outside, looks at me entering the hospital where I was vaccinated today and says: "This one came to get vaccinated because he wanted to." And explain all this, which is how I organized my action, simply because he saw me go through the door — and I went through the door voluntarily, no one was pushing—... So, one always acts consciously and voluntarily. That consciousness may have stopped at a more immediate appearance in its knowledge of its own determinations, it may have advanced beyond those immediate appearances, more or less profoundly, but always what is going to trigger that awareness is a voluntary action. So, anyone who looks at the action, can always turn to the will as an explanation of why the action is taking place.

This is what neoclassical economics does. How do you explain value? He says that in every individual there is a will to maximize his utility. And then, since the "commodities," for every normal individual, have an increasing total utility, but decreasing as a function of quantity, the individual voluntarily, his will, makes him decide how much he is willing to pay for this object, and therefore the value of this object is determined. But if I grab an individual who is going to change and I ask him: "Hey, but are you going to change this? Because what you want to have you like." "Yes." "Do you need it?" "Yes." "And why don't you order three units of this?" "No, because I prefer, instead of having three units of this, to have one unit of this but to have two units of that." "And how much are you willing to sacrifice to have that unity?" "If they ask me for two units of the other for this, no, I will give two units of the other for this." So, neoclassical economics says that this is what determines the exchange value, the price, the willingness of individuals to change.

There is a whole modern school, which I found out about because I had a student, the only neoclassical student of Advanced Topics in Classical and Marxist Economics at the UNS, who is a professor at the UNS now, who brought me some texts (I have them there in the library) of the modern neoclassical theory of value based on groups of... "focus group"... They have another name, but I don't remember. Then they ask the individuals: "And what do you prefer, to have two of these or to have one of these?" And one answers yes, and the other says: no, I don't want anything about that even if they give it to me. And on that basis they say: see? This is the determination of the price by the will of individuals. When that individual made this proposal to me, my answer was: but that is a will that is determined. These are individuals who live in the capitalist mode of production, where the individual has to consciously and voluntarily decide whether he is going to have this or that. Well, at a certain point in my answer, he said: "Enough, enough is enough, I understand you!" [Laughs].

Xatan: Of course, if the mode of production were any other, the will would be mediated by other determinations that we are not able to see right now, but that would not have as a product... The same thing I was expressing a moment ago that I change this for another: maybe there is no such change because the product is

socialized, it is organized collectively. Then I understand the point where you want to get to.

JIC: Yes, exactly. So, in that society you say to an individual: "How much would you change it for?", and the individual is going to tell you but that he does not understand what you are asking him. Because in his society the word "change" (to put it in the extreme sense, with Javiera's anthropological license), that does not exist.

So, that's why I say, all human action except involuntary actions... That is why I set the example in the face-to-face courses, at the beginning of the course: if someone who is present gets angry with what I am saying and turns a notebook over my head, I am not going to do a conscious and voluntary action. That action that I'm going to do, that I'm going to raise my arm, is not going to be governed because I said: "Let's see, the notebook is a material that in relation to the skin of my head is harder, and then, if I don't protect myself against that blow, the notebook is going to hurt me, so I have to raise my arm"... At that moment he already stuck the notebook to me. So, there are human actions that are not conscious and voluntary. The digestive process is not an involuntary conscious action. It is affected by the general social relation, because one eats what the social relation tells one to eat, one eats with the attention proper to a social relation by which one is free and at the same time alienated... It has a lot of determinations of a social nature. The first, moreover, is whether he has enough to eat. But what is clear is that I cannot explain the bad digestion of the individual by the conscience and the will of the individual, because he wanted to have it. In that case I have to ask him why *it seems* that he wanted to have poor digestion, and there I will have the explanation.

[II]

What had been left going around the other time about organic composition, valuable composition, technical composition... […]. We are looking at the movement of the total capital of society and the relationship of how the different portions of capital, variable and constant, move with respect to the development of accumulation in its unity. When we began to look at the process of reproduction, what we had in front of us was a first step, which is to look at simple reproduction, on the basis that, looking at simple reproduction, reproduction on an expanded scale is simple reproduction plus a difference. So, Marx makes the whole development of simple reproduction that showed us the unity of the determinations of both the worker and the capitalist as attributes of capital. So, it is clear that here all movement is governed, and all subjectivity in its movement, what it expresses is the movement of capital. But it is not the problem of the isolated worker or the isolated capitalist: it is the problem of the working class and the capitalist class, and therefore what is at stake is the movement of capital in its universality, of the total capital of society. So, this is present, the movement of the total capital of society.

When we look at simple reproduction, then we look at enlarged reproduction, but in reality, as it appeared in the chapter, development is strongly linked to the forms of enlarged reproduction, so to speak: what happens to the determination of the capitalist as the consciousness of capital and how is the elasticity of capital enhanced in order to be enhanced in its enlarged reproduction. And that was the end of the reference to change in the material conditions of production, to technical change, to the powers of capital that arise from this technical change, which is always governed by the production of relative surplus value. But what happens to the movement of variable capital and constant capital as magnitudes that develop as accumulation develops was not put into play. And Marx is going to put this question, it's in the title in particular, in relation to variable capital: what happens to the demand for labor power as the accumulation of capital moves?

The first thing he is going to say is: well, let's suppose that there is this division between the new capital that is going to be accumulated and the part of the surplus value that the capitalist is going to consume as income. And now, what is going to happen with the movement of capital accumulation? And there he returns to something that we already have in front of us, although it is not posed in these terms. When we began looking at commodity production, what we had in front of us was a normal condition of labor productivity, deviations from this normal productive capacity of labor, and so on. We even looked at the problem which arose with the manifestation of value according to the exchange of the productive power of labour which produced the commodity which expressed its value relatively, which expressed its equivalent, etc. Up to this point, this movement simply appeared in the technical conditions of production, which implies what happens to the means of production, what happens to living labor, simply in these almost singular movements that appeared there.

When we look at the movement of capital, we look at the production of absolute surplus value, where what we had was that all the conditions for the valorization of capital appear to be given: the value of labor power, the length of the working day, the technical conditions, the productive attributes of the worker... We just had this. And we are talking about the different branches of production, where it appeared that each branch needs certain means of production and quantities of labor power. But this did not tell us... Nothing, it depended on the technical conditions in each branch of production. We go on, and when we look at the production of relative surplus value, what appeared is: all the conditions are now set by the movement of capital itself. And one of the substantial conditions which is set by the movement of capital is that the constant capital put into raw materials grows faster than the variable capital as a consequence of the increase in the productivity of labour, and the constant capital put into machinery grows at the expense of the variable capital as a condition for the increase in the productivity of labour. And this movement of increasing the weight of constant capital put into machinery with respect to variable capital, we look upon as the movement itself. And the examples appeared showing that it depends on each branch, how the machinery is incorporated, what forms the machinery has, that there are branches where the introduction of machinery is easier and others less, and it was simply taken as if those conditions did not play any role in what one was looking at.

And now, what Marx is going to do is stop at a synthesis of what we have been seeing happening from the changes in the technical composition of capital, which is a material change, it is a composition of a material nature that links means of production with living labor: the more means of production there are in proportion to the living labor that is put into operation, the technical composition of capital is going to be higher. Since we already know that as the productivity of labor governed by the production of relative surplus value increases, raw materials will grow faster than living labor, and machinery will occupy places where living labor used to intervene, we synthesize this movement as a movement in the technical composition of capital. Now: when we look at the technical composition of capital, it is a material relation between two things which are not homogeneous and therefore cannot be put into a quantitatively determined relation. Moreover, not even one of the two poles... Neither of the two poles strictly, but if at the pole of living labor there were differences of complexity, which we look at as ultimately as sums of simple labor, at the pole of the means of production there is a material diversity irreducible to a material unity. And so the problem we have is that we have to establish a quantitative relationship between two poles that are quantitatively incommensurable with each other. And besides, one of the poles is immeasurable in itself. And then, how do we manage to be able to quantitatively reflect the change in the technical composition of capital?

And here what reappears is something that is in Chapter I, which is that what we have in front of us, the commodity, the capital, are the unity of use value and value. [...] So, just as we have this relationship of a technical nature, we have a relationship of a value nature, the composition of the value of capital. So, now what we can say is: let's indirectly measure the technical composition of capital through its value composition. The problem that I posed to you that appears here (Marx leaves it aside) is that, when we say "constant capital", we know that it is the value of the means of production. But when we say "variable capital", the first thing we have is that variable capital is not synonymous with living labour, it is synonymous with paid living labour.

And what we have to keep in front of us (it does not matter if we are going to use it now or not), is that, with the production of relative surplus value, paid living labor, given the working day, tends to decrease because it frees up unpaid living labor. And so, we are going to measure a technical relationship between the means of production and the amount of living labor. But, let's take it this way: the numerator is means of production, the denominator is quantity of living labor; In our composition of value, the numerator is going to be constant capital—the mass of dead labor—but the denominator is going to be only the paid part of living labor. And then, it is going to move differently from each other. But we have no other option than to measure what is happening with the technical composition of capital.

Why can't we measure it in terms of living labor and dead labor? For we already know the substance of value is abstract labor, socially necessary, materialized in an independent private way, and consequently value is never expressed in quantity of its substance. It is unrecognizable, because the living work that can be recorded is a concrete and private living work. And we do not know whether this is simple

work or complex work, much less whether it has been socially useful or useless, because the condition of socially useful, which is what we have to relate to constant capital, only corresponds to that labor which, materialized in its product, is represented as value. So we have to use the value ratio with this caveat, when that caveat plays a role, we have to take it into account.

So what is Marx going to do? He says: I have no choice but to look at the changes in the technical composition by their reflection in this distorted mirror of the value composition. But since things can appear in it that have nothing to do with the change in the technical composition... Commodities are still produced with the same production technique, but their value has changed by some determination; then I have to purge the movements in the composition of value from those spurious movements, and reduce the organic composition to the composition of value in so far as it is purely determined by the technical composition and reflects the changes that have occurred in the technical composition.

So far, then, that determination appears. Now I will stop at this organic composition, which I think I raised last time. One wonders why he calls it "organic composition" (Marx does not say why). And that name puts one before the question that, as the organ of surplus-value production, the only organ of surplus-value production in capital is variable capital. Why, then, in the relation between constant capital and variable capital, in order to reflect organic composition, is constant capital placed as the numerator and variable capital as the denominator? *My* answer to that is: capital as a whole (constant + variable), as an organ of the production of surplus value, is more powerful the higher the rate of surplus value. And what is the condition for the rate of surplus value to be higher? That the productivity of work is higher. And to make work productivity higher? The substitution of living labor for dead labor, the incorporation of machinery. And then what is going to appear is: it reflects to me the power that this capital has as an organ of the production of surplus value, because despite the fact that variable capital is placed below, what is implicit in constant capital as it grows with respect to variable capital is that this variable capital is a more powerful organ for the production of surplus value. It operates with a higher rate of capital gain. And so what we have here before us is this question of the organic composition of capital. Do you want to raise something?

Javiera: I have a doubt. Perhaps, as you said before, we have to move forward and not stop at this, but... I do not understand how there can be a growing demand for the labor force and not change the total mass of work that is put into operation. How can the composition of capital, the composition of value, remain unchanged, if within it is the quantity of labour required for the utilization of the means of production? Marx, when he begins to explain the composition of capital, is already disaggregating two parts, in terms of value and in terms of matter, composition of value and technical composition. But the composition of value considers the value of labor power, and the technical composition is in the amount of labor required for the utilization of the means of production. My question is: if there is a growing demand for labor power—in relation to the title—how can the composition of capital remain unchanged, if labor power is within the composition of capital?

JIC: I understand. In addition, it is the first thing he is going to develop. If there is no technical change, constant capital grows in the same proportion as variable capital increases. There is no change in the technical composition of capital. A constant technical composition of capital implies the absence of production of relative surplus value. And what Marx is going to accompany is: what would happen if there were no production of relative surplus value? What would happen to the demand for labor power? What would happen to the progress of capital accumulation if there were no production of relative surplus value? And what follows is with a change in the technical composition of capital, that is: here the relative surplus value appeared and then the movements are no longer in the same proportion.

Javiera: Wait for me. I say again: if there is a growing demand for labor power, I understand that the composition of capital cannot remain unchanged. I'm going to put it in the negative so that what I'm thinking is made explicit: if there is a growing demand for labor power, labor power is within the composition of capital, right? As if there can be no movement of labor power or variation in the productive changes of the means of production and at the same time the composition of capital remain unchanged.

JIC: Yes. With this: think that there is no technical change. So there is accumulation, the capital, let's assume that it is 50% constant capital / 50% variable capital, which is the technical composition from which we start. Capital is doubled, there is surplus value, and this surplus value is converted into new capital: variable capital is doubled and constant capital is doubled, there is still the same technical composition. Capital accumulates again, capital doubles again, constant capital and variable capital double. It does not change the technical composition. This is the first case that he is going to analyze. What would happen to the demand for labor power if accumulation were sustained on this basis? It is a purely extensive accumulation, so to speak. There is no change in the rate of surplus value, it is a movement that reproduces itself larger and larger, but always identical to itself. [...][294]Is the question clear, then? Here there is no technical change, the two move in parallel. And so the question is, what happens to the demand for labor power if constant capital and variable capital grew in parallel? That the demand for labor power would grow in the same proportion as the demand for elements of constant capital would grow. And so far, this is the simplest determination of the process of capital accumulation.

You can actually restructure these developments that we're seeing by saying [in three steps]:

1) **Simple reproduction**, no accumulation.

2) **Reproduction on an enlarged scale**.
   2.a) without technical change.
   2.b) with technical change.

[294] In the end, the doubt is solved by clarifying that it grows in the same proportion. Jump further explanation with slides.

And for now, we're going to be in 2nd, expanded reproduction. And this is what we are going to have here to face. Was it clearer? Okay. Is there anything else about this question of organic, technical and value composition? So we continue with the development that Marx is doing.

What then comes next? Well, he is going to refer to the fact that when he talks about "composition of capital" he is simply referring to organic composition. The question arises that, if we are looking at the capitals in a branch of production, what is going to appear is that, within the range of normality, there are capitals that are going to have a higher organic composition and others that are going to have a lower organic composition. Because some are going to be using a more productive technique, and others are going to be below average. But what Marx is going to say is: but if one considers the branch as a whole, there is an average composition of that capital: the average of the compositions of the different capitals. And if one averages all these averages of the different branches, one takes the total capital of society.

Marx is going to put it here as the social capital *of a country*, this cut will always appear where sometimes it is explicit, that it is a national process of capital accumulation, at other times it is the universal movement of capital accumulation. I tend to take it as if we are looking at determination in its general unity, so it is social capital; I do not stop to say that it is fragmented between national spaces because then I would have to start developing the differences between national spaces. For me the question becomes clearer when one looks at it as the total capital of society.

I make a clarification with the term "social capital": it has become fashionable in the inversion of every social relation as if it were the relation established by a capital, to speak of the "social capital of the workers", that the individual who has a certain knowledge in his person has a social capital. That is the inversion of every personal attribute as if it were an attribute of capital, only that the worker does not have capital to put to valorization, what he has is his labor power with less developed productive attributes that will allow him to sell that labor power for its value (in what we have so far). and that value may be higher or lower according to what it costs to produce those productive attributes that the worker has. So we must beware of this extremely unfortunate use of "social capital" to erase the fact that the worker is exploited by capital, which has nothing but its labor power to sell. I clarify it every time the term appears – now I have to clarify it in the writings as well – [...] because I had some queries because I used the term social capital, thinking that it could only be linked to this spurious use.

So what Marx says is: if we look at the totality of the capitals of society, this capital has a certain organic composition. The movement of what capital are we looking at here? The question we have about what happens to the reproduction of capital and the demand for labor power does not make the capitals of each branch, it does not make the capitals individual, it makes the capital total of society. Therefore, all the differences in organic composition that may exist in the capitals of each branch is not a relevant issue for what we have to look at here. What matters here is what happens to the organic composition of the total capital of

society. When you look at the organic capitals of the different branches (I put it simply as an illustration), you can see that there are branches that for certain circumstances have a relatively low organic composition, and branches that for other circumstances have relatively high organic compositions. What Marx is going to make clear here is that, as he is going to look at the total capital of society, what happens between the different branches is absolutely irrelevant. I am going to look for the verbatim quotation [...]. What Marx is going to say is: what we are going to deal with, then, is the organic composition of social capital.

Why do I dwell on this? When we get to Volume 3, we are going to find the discussions that appear around the "transformation of values into the price of production", and we are going to see that systematically, in the texts of Marxist authors who deal with this, it will appear in the affirmation that Marx in Volume 1 assumes a uniform organic composition of the capitals of all branches. And nowhere does Marx say that. What he says is that the capitals of all branches are different, but that since he is going to look at the total capital of society, he is going to look at the average of those compositions. So, I think it is important because sometimes there are people who participate in the workshops they have read about the transformation of values into production prices, and they have come across this statement. Is there anything you want to raise at this point? […]

Aristides: And "global capital"? What does it refer to? Another movement?

JIC: No, no. If I remember correctly, because it may be, the term "global" is more commonly used in English translations by equivalent to "total". There is not "*total social capital*", but "*global social capital*". I have a memory of having seen it at some point, but it is the same at this point that one is looking here. Then it may be that someone associates the use of "global" with "universal". So, where "national" and "universal" appear, it may be used with some universal sense, but I don't use it in general. [...].

So, what comes next is to look at what is going to happen to the evolution of the organic composition of the social capital as accumulation advances. And now in particular we have this situation in which what is going to unfold is the movement where the organic composition of the social capital remains unchanged. And that means that there is a quantity of means of production and a quantity of labor power that will always keep the same proportion but that, as a mass of surplus value is generated each year, it will always be destined for the individual consumption of the capitalists, but what governs what part remains and what part accumulates is this other part that is going to accumulate. And that accumulation materially, technically, has this only extensive character, where variable capital and constant capital grow in the same proportion.

And here a question will appear that is implicit in all development, but which is not explicit, and that is how the demand for labor power grows in relation to the growth of the working population. And what is not explicit is how the working population grows. It is a question that comes from classical economics. A starting point is: the working population grows in a given proportion, and then there are deviations from that growth; and there are discussions about the diversion. But, in

principle, although it is not explicit, the analysis is linked to a certain growth in the working population. Because Marx is going to state that if the need for the accumulation of capital exceeds the increase in labor power, "or in the number of workers, the demand for workers can preponderate over their supply, thereby raising wages."[295] Now, why should the needs of capital accumulation grow faster than the demand for labor power in a process in which there is no technical change? The determination at play there is that the working population is growing faster than the demand for labor power. And now I am going to try to dwell on this beyond what is stated in the text.

I once made a quantitative diagram of the velocities of growth and the organic compositions of capital, and the velocity of growth of the working population and so on, and over the years I have become somewhat critical of what was proposed there. But we can look at some of that. I don't know if it's worth it because they are paintings and paintings with different assumptions and proportions. I'm going to try to look at it more generally. Then I will look at some aspects.

What Marx is going to propose is this: without putting the movement of growth of the working population, the demand for labor power grows faster than the supply of labor power. And what then appears is: how far can this increase in the demand for labour-power go beyond the increase in the supply of labour-power, the first consequence of which is the increase of wages above the value of labour-power? And in reality, if one were to state that the increase in the demand for labor power continues to exceed the increase in supply, the imbalance would be accentuated, and consequently, wages would have to continue to grow above the value of labor power. And the appearance could be raised that if this situation is sustained indefinitely or repeated in a sustained way, all the surplus value will be converted into wages of the workers, and then we will reach a moment in which the surplus value has disappeared: there is no more unpaid work, all the work of the workers is paid.

If this could be the case (I am going to propose this), it would be in the interest of the working class to combat technical development. Because if without technical development the demand for labor power is going to grow faster than the supply steadily, the wage is going to be higher and higher and the point could be reached at which the entire value of the product of labor is appropriated by the workers. And the image may appear that given this situation the capitalist mode of production was overcome. This image corresponds, for example, to market socialism: each unit of production belongs to the collective of workers in that unit of production and they appropriate the entire product of their labor. What is it that Marx is going to put forward in part, and in part am I going to put in relation to the growth of the working population and to the concrete mechanism? What would never disappear on that basis is alienation, in this case in the commodity. Because the workers would continue to confront the product of their labor as the bearer of a social relationship that dominates them and that they cannot control, therefore, it would be the indefinite reproduction of the alienated consciousness. There is a reason why these kinds of fantasies may be fueled by concrete movement.

[295] Marx, K. (1977: 518), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

When one looks at the growth rates of the working population, of any population, they contain a series of determinations that, so to speak, limit them. A worker population is formed, let's assume, by 100 individuals, and as long as the process of biological reproduction of the human being as we know it continues, it cannot double every year because, to begin with, half of the population is not the immediate bearer of biological reproduction – in the concrete data it is less than half. Only the female population is the carrier of the direct capacity for biological reproduction. But of that population there is a part that is not yet of childbearing age and there is a part that is past childbearing age. And besides, all population growth first has to compensate for the part of the population that dies and that has to be replaced each year in order for it to manifest as population growth.

And then, if one makes all these determinations, what will appear is that, considering a series of more or less arbitrary data on the composition of the male and female population, the period of fertility and the production process, what happens is that the maximum annual growth rate that can sustain that population, in which all women of childbearing age are giving birth to one child per year, is ~10%. And I compared it with growth rates of the demand for labor of 4% and 2.5%, and this would correspond, with those assumptions, to sustain a rate of 4% annual growth of the population, 4.7 children per woman per year and a rate of 2.5% growth of the demand for labor force means 3.5 children per woman. throughout fertile life. This implies that population growth rates cannot be extraordinarily high. When you see a population growth rate of 4-5%, you say that it is growing rapidly. And apart from the fact that there are negative growth rates, I have the specific case of Argentina, which has been decreasing and according to the census, I don't remember if it was from 2010 or 2001, 1999... Like that, it was 1'a little bit.

Then, the appearance that a sustained and accelerated accumulation of capital without technical change can absorb the entire supply of labor power and push wages above value, and in a fantastic hypothesis, will come to absorb all surplus value... First Marx is going to answer it in general terms, saying something that is not strictly the answer. Because he says that every year more workers enter to work than the previous year; Then, inevitably, there will come a time when the balance between supply and demand for labor will be restored. But if it is simply by the process of biological reproduction, proportionally more workers will enter who could keep the right proportion with respect to the growth of the demand for labor power or... Sorry: they could not reproduce that imbalance indefinitely, I correct myself if I said it wrong.

What Marx is going to point out is that in the first half of the eighteenth century there are complaints in England about wages rising because of a lack of labor power. Now, what is the mechanism which shows that there is no such possibility of the exhaustion of the accumulation of capital by the increase of wages, nor consequently of the superseding [by this means] capitalist production? As wages rise above value, and the more they rise, the more accumulation will be strangled because there is less and less surplus value available for accumulation, and consequently, capital will grow more and more slowly. And if a given rate of

increase in the working population was considered, what is going to happen is that, just as capital grows more slowly, the demand for labour power grows more slowly, and in the face of a sustained increase in the working population, labour power will begin to be surplus. And just as there is a surplus of labor power, the wage will fall towards the value of labor power.

Therefore, with respect to whether the non-incorporation of the production of relative surplus value is a political action that would allow the working class to overcome the capitalist mode of production or at least improve the conditions of sale of labor power, what one has beyond what can happen in the immediate, in a sustained movement, is that it reproduces the same starting situation. The working class is returning to the same point where it was when it started. What Marx is going to propose is: here the purpose is not to produce use values for the sake of the production of use values, what governs the movement is the valorization of capital. And it may be that circumstantially the workers can sell their labor power under better conditions, but that is the reproduction of the alienation of the worker as an attribute of capital, his condition as a forced worker for the total capital of society. Such a reduction in surplus value can in no way lead to the limit beyond which it would become a fetter, an effective threat to the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production.

There is a certain ambiguity that he could sell it under better conditions, but it remains as if he were selling it *above* the value. In *Wages, Price and Profit*, Marx is adamant that the only thing that workers can achieve is to sell labor power for value. Here some condition appears (which would only make sense as a sustained condition, because it is already known that due to circumstances it may be that it is sold above value), as if leaving ambiguously the possibility that there is a certain sale above value, but it says that this would simply imply the quantitative reduction of unpaid work. And Marx, here is going to make a reference to the loosening of the chains, that submission to capital is going to have more tolerable forms, that it is going to allow the workers to live a little better, "providing it with clothes, furniture, etc., and forming a small reserve fund in money," [296]but the fact that some slaves were better fed and clothed does not change the relationship of slavery. The fact that individual workers live better does not change the exploitation of the wage worker. And the last sentence I'm going to put says:

> The fact that labour rises in price as a result of the accumulation of capital only means that the volume and weight of the gold chains which the wage-labourer has already forged for himself can hold him in place without remaining so tight.[297]

And here it is ambiguous, it is not known why this situation could occur in capitalism, and that it has lent itself to the proposals about the existence of the labor aristocracy as a portion of the working class "bought" by capital in the sense that it responds to the interests of capital as a political subject. And when one looks at the evolution of wages, which we have already seen, it is true that from Marx's time to the present (here it is somewhat complicated, until a few years ago it seemed clearer) there is an increase *not* in the value of labor power, but in real

[296] Ibid., p. 521.
[297] Ibid., pp. 521-22.

wages. But there is an increase that we saw that is linked to the development of the productive attributes that capital demands from the worker, not with an ambiguous: "Well, let them earn a little more", and the capitalists are going to give up a part of their surplus value so that the workers feel tied with chains that are less tight. So, this proposal appears, from my point of view, very ambiguously raised. Moreover, in relation to a real movement that exists after wages, which are largely subsequent to the moment when Marx writes this, but which would empty of content, as a necessity of capital that springs from the materiality of the labor process, the changes in the conditions of sale of labor power.

Iván: That passage is strange, isn't it? It seems that he is seeing an improvement in the living conditions of the workers, but he associates it with a sale of labor power above its value.

JIC: Yes. He does not say that the value has risen, but neither does he associate it with what he said, with the historical and moral element, which moreover no longer corresponds to associate it, because now there is the worker, the working class determined in its individual consumption as an attribute of capital, with which it does not either. Why, then, as an attribute of capital, would capital loosen its chains, if that is to mutilate its capacity for accumulation in exchange for nothing? Because in short, the labor force could be reproduced with the required productive attributes without paying that much. It would seem like an attack of kindness on the part of the capitalists, of generosity, that they are moved by the workers, or the expression of the bought labor aristocracy, who pay more because they are allies of the capitalist class, the working class are traitors. For me, that exposition is not consistent. The workers sell labor power for its value under normal conditions, and circumstantially, in what we have so far, it may be that they are selling it above its value, but the very regulation of the capitalist mode of production will lead to the sale of labor power for its value.

Javiera: Yes, but what happens in those circumstantial moments when you sell above the value? I, at least, in the translation have to "increase the price of labor." But what happens to the working class when it is circumstantially sold above value?

JIC: This is what appears there: she would be better dressed, better fed, with the capacity to form a savings fund. And, in fact, that is the description of the transformations in the determinations of the value of labor power. Today the formation of the retirement fund is part of what is considered the value of the labor force. It is not the goodness of the capitalists, that is what the ideologues of capital say, but those of us who have a critical point of view regarding the capitalist mode of production... No.

Xatan: Regarding what you are talking about, if I remember correctly, in *Wages, Price and Profit* Marx spoke of how if the value of labor power increased, it was largely due to the social struggles that occurred throughout history. That is to say, the current moment that we are seeing in capitalist society is not the same as the previous moment, and this is not because of the kindness of the capitalists, but because of the working class struggle itself. [...].

JIC: Yes. I was referring to *wages, price, and profit* in another respect, which is: this is going to be sold for its value; not the movement of value. In any case, two things: one is that it is stated that the cause—not the form—of the wage increase, is the action of the working class. What I remember is that there he states that the working class will never be able to stop fighting for the value of its labor power; In the face of the image that is put forward that any increase in wages will be lost, which makes it implicit that it is only possible to fight for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, which Marx is going to deploy, the conclusion is that the working class will not be able to sell labor power above value, but that is why it can never cease to fight for the concrete conditions of sale of labor power. Now: this is one aspect. But the other aspect is this.

The "subsistence wage", now with what we saw in the chapter on simple reproduction, is not simply the minimum to survive. What determines the value of labor power is what the worker needs to consume in order to have the productive attributes that capital demands of its labor power. Because, in addition, "what is needed to survive" is an ambiguous definition in itself. For me, the example of this ambiguity is given by this case that Marx points out of an individual who makes a concoction that has nutritional properties and is much cheaper than the still miserable food consumed by English workers in the first half of the nineteenth century. So, in reality you can produce the cheapest labor power yet, but there are points at which the term "subsistence" is not simply an abstract physical subsistence. It is linked to the length of the working day, and for me, it is essentially linked to the intensity of work and to the qualitative attributes that are needed to carry out the work.

When with the development of machinery the need for schooling of future workers appears, it is no longer subsistence, there is a moment in which the future worker is needing to consume use values to have a labor force in the future that has productive attributes that cannot be produced in any other way. And when we look at the historical development of what has been happening with the transformation in the materiality of work, what we have is that what appeared as a condition... That if one were to translate what subsistence is today, it is to have television, because an individual who does not have a television is so isolated from the movement of social life that he cannot connect with others. Then we have to look at what happens to the population that cannot even sell its labor power, but let us take it in terms before this possibility has appeared that there is a part of the working population that does not even manage to sell its labor power at any price, or sustainably below value. But today the availability of a cell phone is practically a condition of subsistence, it is access to social existence. If you don't have the instrument and the knowledge to make use of the instrument... Today, starting a retirement process requires having a cell phone at least: that is the condition... For me the term "subsistence" is absolutely ambiguous. It appeared to be closely linked to the development of classical economics where workers' consumption was limited to a very elementary consumption of food, clothing, no consumption of educational training... the only thing there was, on Sunday, the religious festival. But I am also going to raise another problem of the term "subsistence", the other way around, as a determinant of the value of labour power.

If the wage is subsistence, then an individual who eats on all fours in order to stay alive, is being paid for his labor power for value. This appears and is a matter of political discussion, we saw it when we were talking about the determinants of the value of labor power for the first time, it seems to me. It is the proposition within Marxism that labor power is a "peculiar commodity" whose value is not determined by the cost of subsistence, but by supply and demand. And in that case, the worker who eats from the garbage would be a worker who is selling his labor power for value, because he is subsisting, he is still alive. And so, the term "subsistence" has become a weapon against the working class, an ideological inversion: "Don't complain about the wage because that is the value of labor power. Do you survive? So they have nothing else to claim." Hence my reasoning for which I criticize the term "subsistence wage" and consider that politically one has to... that this is in the terms of what we were talking about at the beginning, of what we proposed to do in the workshop and of the question of method.

If one is confronted in Marx's text with the posing of all the concrete forms, the critical reading, what one does is to subject to criticism each of these questions that one faces. And to submit to criticism is to ask what forces me to answer what is put here. I have to reproduce for myself the immediate concretes that I have in front of me, and ask myself if when I face that concrete, what is in the text reproduces the concrete that I am looking at or not, and if it does not reproduce it, I have to ask myself why it is not reproducing it. And that is why appropriating development is neither convincing oneself of what the author says, nor is it reading what the author says, but it is reproducing for oneself what the author is confronting it, and asking oneself whether in the real concrete in front of it, it recognizes what the author presents to it or does not recognize it.

Xatan: [...] I said it from this perspective that if there is a degree of social struggle, that degree is reflected in that value of the labor force, that is what I basically mean, it is what was being explained in *Salary, Price and Profit*. So, I understand that this is where the idea that this minimum can be altered comes from, although in *Salary, Price and Profit*, he explains that the physical limit... What we have talked about before: it is a physical *social limit* , obviously, if so-and-so decides to eat from the garbage can, he was not talking about social status. I understand that he was talking about a social degree, a physical and social limit that is elastic. For example, mobile phones, which are basically already part of that value because those who do not have a mobile phone are not solvent in the social era in which we live. So, from that perspective I can understand the meaning that Marx gives to this increase in the value of labor power which, again, is obviously not the end of the class struggle nor is it a solution or anything like that. These are other connotations that are not implicit in Marx or in what I am saying, I think it is important to make it clear.

JIC: In any case, there is this aspect: if I explain the level of wages by the class struggle, now the problem I have is that I have to explain why that level of the class struggles. And the problem that arises is that one can explain it by consciousness, abstractly, or in reality that is the form that the transformations in the materiality of labor take, how the transformations in the materiality of labor take shape as a

necessity of capital of the transformation of labor power, which is carried in the political action of the working class. That these levels of struggle are not self-explanatory, but that these levels of struggle are explained by why is happening with the materiality of work, what transformation capital is needing with respect to the productive attributes of the workers; And since there is a contradictory need between the total capital of society and individual capitals, these transformations in productive attributes can only take shape through the political and trade union action of the working class. That's why... I don't remember the paragraph, but I am taking it as you quote it: I submit to criticism that observation, that it depends on the struggle of the working class; So, it is necessary to explain what the level of struggle of the working class depends on. But that's it, I don't know if you want to propose anything else.

Xatan: Yes, the workers' struggle may be implicit. What it says explicitly is: "the determination of the value of labor enters into the traditional level in each country, it is not only a question of physical subsistence but of the satisfaction of certain needs that arise from the social conditions in which men live and are educated." Then he talks about the English and Irish standard of living, etc., and I think that somewhere he also talked about this being reflected historically, I don't know if in the confrontation right now in particular, but I think it is implicit even if he does not put it as a cause or it is not the ultimate determination in this sense. But it does talk about there being a physical degree and a social degree. I understand that when we talk about the "social degree" is what we mean that there can be an increase, here as it explicitly says the "English standard of living" can rise or it can fall, it is altered throughout history and the conditions of the worker, the conditions of capital, etc., of the relations between the two.

JIC: That's why I raise this again: we have to explain what this condition, that social difference, depends on.

Xatan: Yes, I understand that what you want to get at is that this condition of social life is reflected in how commodities have different dispositions of value, how capital also alters those relations with the subject of work, etc. I think that what you want to get at is that the ultimate determination in this sense would be the relations with capital itself that the working class is having: since commodities have x value, if this value increases or decreases, then it will also be reflected in the minimums of labor power.

JIC: Yes, because the worker consumes the commodities that capital determines are necessary to reproduce that labor power, always under the mediation of the condition of a free individual, but that "on average," he consumes what capital needs him to consume. And that the reason for changes in the level of consumption is to be found in the changes in the productive attributes of objects.

Xatan: By "attributes" here we are talking about the degree of development of the productive forces, right? If greater specialization is required, then we need to have a more elaborate education process and this is also reflected in the value of the labor force, right?

JIC: Exactly.

[…]

[III]

[…] What were we seeing? It was a process of capital accumulation that excludes change in the technical composition of capital, therefore it is a simply extensive process. The proportions between variable capital and constant capital will always be the same, the proportion in which each of these two capitals grows is immediately the same in which total capital grows. And what could appear as a limit to the development of this form of accumulation was that capital would grow faster than the working population, all the more so that the supply of labor power would begin to lack in relation to the demand for capital, and that this would bring wages above the value of labor power. But that even this possibility carried with it its own limit in the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, because just as wages were raised above the value of labor power, accumulation would begin to be strangled, the demand for labor power would grow more and more slowly and the re-establishment of unity would be forced.

And then, what would appear is the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, where no matter how much the wage seems to contain the potentiality of an increase, of an improvement in the conditions of reproduction of the labor force, what appears in that same mechanism is the limit to that potentiality and the reproduction of the mode of production. which is not the increase in the working population that would lead to the "imbalance" of the need for capital with respect to the supply of labor power, but the independent variable, so to speak, is what needs capital has. It is then this absolute variation in the movement of capital accumulation that appears inverted as relative variations in the mass of labour power at the disposal of capital. And this inversion is what is going to be ideologically represented as situations of excessive growth and insufficient growth of the working population. And that then, what underlies this, which is presented as a natural law of population, is the relationship between capital, the movement of accumulation and the rate of wages; It is the relation between the unpaid labour of the workers converted into capital and the labour required to have additional labour power available for the accumulation of capital. And so, it is the magnitude of capital, the magnitude of the working population, and the magnitude between the unpaid labor of the working population, and the paid labor of the working population.

And the synthesis that he is going to make is that this relationship that is inverted with respect to what is necessary for the reproduction of the process of human life, which is the availability of labor necessary for the reproduction of labor power and unpaid labor that reflects inverted the fact that the condition for the reproduction of the life of society depends on movement... of the product of labor that the working population does not receive, that reflects the inversion in which the worker exists for the valorization of the value that has already been

created. Human life, therefore, exists to serve the material wealth that is already created instead of the material wealth already created that satisfies the needs of the working population.

And then what is going to appear is: without this change in the technical composition of capital, where can the development of accumulation lead? What is going to be faced is that even if more favorable conditions appear for the reproduction of the working population, the fundamental character of capitalist production does not change at all. And then, he is going to quote what was the closing of the chapter of simple reproduction, which is not simply a process of commodity production or capital production, but is a process of production and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, which what it does is reproduce on one side the capitalists and on the other side the wage workers. If this is what has already been said of simple reproduction, what reproduction on an enlarged scale does is to reproduce on an enlarged scale the capitalist mode of production at one pole more capitalists and more powerful, and at the other pole more wage-workers.

And the reference to what we have been seeing of the appearances of the capitalist mode of production reappears, of the worker's condition as a free individual and his attachment to capital under the fiction of exchange, of the passage of the sale of the worker's labor power from one capitalist to another. And what is going to appear then is: if what is at stake here is the increase in the labor power that is put into operation, that the total capital grows, and in the same proportion its need for labor power, and the condition for the accumulation of capital is that the working class grows, that the proletariat increases. And it will appear that the very mechanism of the accumulation process causes the mass of wage-workers to increase, whose labor power becomes the force of capital, in the service of the accumulation of capital. And that at the same time that the worker works, what he does is to reproduce his subsumption in the product of his own labor, the product of his labor is capital and this is personified by the capitalist. So, what is reproduced is this subjection, which appears as "subordination"[298] in FCE's translation, of the worker as an attribute of capital. What the very mechanism of accumulation does is to reproduce the condition of the working class, which has an ever larger scale, its subsumption as an attribute of capital.

I don't remember if we had ever seen it [...], but I was thinking of starting with this anyway. […] If we look this far, in the reproduction on an enlarged scale, at the very technical composition of capital, what appears is the indefinite reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Nothing in this movement contains a contradiction of the capitalist mode of production itself that leads it to the need to surpass itself: it can multiply indefinitely. What is going to appear now is what happens to this movement when capital expresses all its potentiality for accumulation: it is not only extensive through the multiplication of the mass of absolute surplus value, but it is the permanent regeneration of relative surplus value. […] When we get into that, we're going to go back to things that we looked at when we started more closely than Marx did, and here we're going to raise it again,

[298] Marx, K. (1977: 519), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

because now the question of a relationship that we're going to see if it's valid or not immediately appears in the text.

2. Relative decrease in the variable part of capital as accumulation progresses and, with it, concentration.

The title already has the result in advance: what we are going to find is the change in the technical composition. We have already seen what technical composition was, and the question will appear again, putting it in relation, or as an expression of what is happening with the productivity of labor. The greater the mass of means of production which the labourer puts into operation and transforms into the product of his labour, the greater the productivity of his labour. Because he says: this increase in the means of production comes from two sources. In the first place, the increase in the productivity of labor is a cause of the more than proportional increase in the means of production. Basically, this is what happens with raw materials. Because the greater the productivity of labor, the greater the amount of time that will be operated on a greater mass of raw materials. And the second situation is the other way around, it is the cause of the increase in labor productivity. Because the incorporation of machinery is the key to sustaining this greater productivity of labor. We have already seen that, with the incorporation of machinery, constant capital not only grows faster, but grows at the expense of variable capital.

And then, what we are going to have is what we had seen: that in the technical composition, the mass of dead labor put into operation is going to be put into relation to the mass of paid living labor that is put into operation. Marx is going to put it as if there were no difference. In this sense, he says: the mass of means of production compared with the mass of labour-power which sets it in motion, is in turn reflected in the composition of value, in the increase of constant capital at the expense of variable capital. And what we have already seen is that when one takes only paid live work, it will have an effect on the indicator. But I am going to add, before going back to what we had seen in December, one more question that Marx raises here.

Marx goes on to propose that this decrease of variable capital with respect to constant capital, the changes in the composition of capital, are an approximate indicator of the changes that occur in the material composition of capital. And he is going to put as a cause... He is going to say: in reality, the change in the technical, material composition is greater than what is reflected in the change in the composition of value. And he will give as an explanation for this that the value of the means of production, with the increase in the productivity of labor, is decreasing. And since the means of production are becoming cheaper, in reality the technical composition grows much more than the composition of value grows. Do you understand why? Because now there is a material mass of means of production to which corresponds — let's put it in very crude terms — the same mass of value as before, only that the productivity of labor has doubled, the production of means of production has doubled, and the total mass of value of the

means of production remains the same. because each one is worth half of what it was worth before. And so, I don't have a change in the composition of value, but I do have a change in the material composition: I have twice as many means of production as the amount of living labor that was in operation.

Was it understood what Marx is proposing? And so far he appears to be right. But the objection I make to this assertion is: but in the composition of value it is not the mass of living labour that plays a role, the value of labour-power plays a role. And first of all, just as the value of the elements of constant capital decreases with the increase in the productivity of labor, so the value of the means of subsistence of the workers also decreases with the increase in the productivity of labor. And there is nothing to say that the productivity of the labour which produces the means of production ought to increase more than the productivity of the labour which produces means of subsistence for the labourers. [...] And if we are comparing the mass of value that is objectified in the means of production with the mass of value that is objectified in the means of life, the two masses up to this point do not have to fall in the same proportion. And so, in my opinion, it is not a correct observation, the change in the technical composition in the reflection that the value composition has is underestimated. I even add the other element that I had raised before we made the cut.

When one is measuring the technical composition, what one has to compare is what Marx calls the "objective condition" and the "subjective condition," the mass of means of production against the mass of living labor. But when one takes variable capital as an indicator of the mass of living labour, the problem with variable capital is that it does not cover all living labour, it only covers a part that with the production of relative surplus value is smaller and smaller, so I have a factor of reduction of variable capital which is not a factor of reduction of the quantity of living labour. And consequently, the value composition, instead of showing a decrease in the movement of the technical composition, in my opinion, reflects the multiplied movement of the technical composition. For if the quantity of living labour were to remain the same, but the value of labour-power is falling, the quantity of living labour is becoming cheaper just as it is cheaper in the means of production, on the one hand, but also since it does not simply remain constant because the portion of the value product of the working day which is appropriated by the workers is decreasing, the effect would be the other way around. The value composition is overestimating the change in technical composition. It is open to discussion.

Fernando: A question, Juan. When you want to look at what happens with the technical composition, what unit of measurement do you use if not the unit of value in relation to the means of production? Especially in machinery. Because in raw materials one can say: well, I measure it in some unit of measurement, quantity of raw materials; In the part of living labor one can say that in the number of hours of living labor, but in the part of the means of production, what unit of measurement do you use if not the one of value?

JIC: It's immeasurable. Technical composition is a quantitative relationship between two qualitatively distinct elements. One can look at how the technical

composition increases, but one cannot measure how... I made this comparison last time: if you look at yourself and say how much you knew when you were five years old, and how much now, you say, "More." How much more? It is a quantitative relationship that, as it contains, in this case, knowledge, is qualitatively different, it has no end, it does not have how much. So, it can necessarily only be measured indirectly.

And there is another observation: I cannot measure in the technical composition how much living work is applied. Because the work that is applied is concrete labor, and what I can look at simply... Then one can make crude measurements, but precise measurements... It is a private job, so I see a production process and I don't know if it is socially necessary work or not. When I measure it in the value composition, I know that socially necessary labor came in, but I don't know how long it is. Because the only way that socially necessary labor expresses itself is through value. I cannot measure the socially necessary work of a society. Which appears in Cockshott's fantasies that he computes the total work that society does: then it is not private labor, there is an immediate unity between production and social consumption. Then what they are going to say is: well, but if there is a surplus of a commodity, then, instead of putting the label that says "10 hours of work", they are going to put the label that says "9 hours of work".

There are no measures. One can take approximate measurements, but what one cannot say is: *this* is the amount of work that is materialized in the social product that is recognized as socially necessary. It can make coarse measurements. Therefore, there is no way to compare, to relate dead labor and living labor except through the value relation. When we put it as through the value relation, this problem appears. And if I want to put it in relation to total living labour, the problem I have is that I would have to compare it with the mass of total value. And, again: I have a data on the quantity of paid labor power – which is the value of labor power – but I do not have data on the... it would have to take the total value produced. And there again I am faced with the fact that this total value produced, in fact, leaves out part of the social labor, so I cannot relate it to all the social labor. So, this is the only way to do the measurement. With one more clarification: this is a relation of productive labor, of labor that produces surplus value. But then I have circulation work, which also uses means that are used for circulation, but it is not a work that produces surplus value. So, the concrete measurements are much weaker than what is the simplest determination that we are looking at. I don't know if I answered or beat around the bush.

Fernando: No, no, it's perfect. In other words, the way I have to look at technical composition is through only value composition, which has these issues that we were looking at. Marx sees an underestimation due to the cheapening of the means of production, and one could say: well, if labor power is cheapened enough and in a greater proportion than the means of production, it would already be overestimated. And you make this determination that, because variable capital is only paid living labor, the composition of value in relation to the technical composition is already overestimated.

JIC: The evolution of the composition, the indicator is overestimated, from the outset. But the relative movement is what matters, the problem is how that coefficient moves. In any case, Marx also clarifies that he is going to call the composition of value "technical composition of capital" insofar as it reflects changes in the technical composition. If there are changes in the value composition that do not come from changes in the technical composition, that would not be reflected in the organic composition. Look at what changes in the value composition do not come from changes in the technical composition... At some point, I don't remember where, I had been looking at possibilities. But these are changes that appear.

I'm trying to remember one that isn't just a price change... that price changes external to the movement... This is so: if I look at the unit of the total capital of society, every change in the composition of value is given by some change somewhere in the technical composition. If you continue to use the same machinery as before, but the value of that machinery decreased because a new machine was incorporated that sustains the same productivity of labor but has less value, then I have a change in the composition of value and technically I have the same as I had before. But if it became cheaper in the branch that uses the machine, I do not have a change in the technical composition, even if I have a change in the value composition. Do you understand? I continue to use the same machine as before, only now this machine is cheaper because the productivity of the labor that produces it increased, and then its value decreased, I have the moral wear and tear of the machinery, but my technical composition remains the same as before. That would not be a change in the organic composition. But if I look at the total capital of society, somewhere there was a technical change, that's why the machine became cheaper, and if there was a technical change, somewhere there was a change in the technical composition of capital. So when I look at the total capital of society, it's hard to locate a change in the composition of value, which further implies that commodities are being sold for their value. If I have a change in the price of a commodity, it is clear that this is not a change in the composition of value, it is an oscillation of the composition of value, but it is not a change. When I look at individual capital I can find these examples. But when I look at the unity of the total capital of society, it is very difficult for there to be a change in the value of a commodity which does not contain somewhere a change in the technical composition of capital.

Fernando: This would be more indirectly what I am going to propose, because it is clear that there is a change in the technical composition somewhere in the accumulation of capital. But in the case of an increase in the cost of the labor force, because that labor force is required to generate greater productive attributes... The determination of that is, clearly, a technical change in some process that requires an expensive workforce. But in the concrete temporal movement it can mean an increase in the composition of value without a specific technical change prior to or that is developing, I don't know how to say it, but with a mediation that is not immediate.

JIC: It appears that the decrease in the value of the labor force is affecting my value composition and is not reflecting the change in the technical composition.

Therefore, it should not be a change in the organic composition. However, it does appear as a change in organic composition because it implies less variable capital than constant capital. The situation the other way around, to which Marx makes some mention here of "no matter how much the worker is paid"... Later in this chapter, at the end, there will also be an observation that the iron chain becomes a golden chain and does not change the situation of the worker.

It is in the "General Law of Capitalist Accumulation" [This Chapter XXIII]. It must have enclosed—I think what you were saying—a change in the technical composition somewhere through which a labor force is needed whose value is going to be altered, but it may not rise. It may have more need for use-values, but its value decreases: it is not immediately more value of labour-power. The change in the working day also plays a role here. The increase in labour intensity, which requires a shortening of the working day, also changes the proportion of living labour to dead labour, because the quantity of living labour decreases. But it may happen that this increase in intensity from the point of view of the worker is compensated not by a decrease in the value of his labour-power, but in this case by an increase in that value, a less proportional decrease, but the relation between constant capital and variable capital will not reflect changes in the technical composition. There are a series of factors that intervene in this movement. I don't know if you want to say anything more about this.

Let's go ahead. And here Marx points to another question, which is the separation between the capital *used* and the capital *consumed* in each cycle of production. The technical composition refers to the capital used, which here is synonymous with "capital advanced" by the capitalist (in Volume 2 differentiations will appear). It is the full value of the machinery. What about the development of the production of relative surplus value based on machinery? [...] The organic composition of capital is that of the capital used. This organic composition will be reflected in the movement of the composition of the capital consumed. The constant capital part will advance at the expense of variable capital. What did we have? The capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery is that the value of the constant capital which is added to the value of the product must be less than the variable capital which was saved by the incorporation of the machinery. So, a part that was variable capital will have disappeared and its place will be occupied by constant capital. So, there is a relative decrease in variable capital, but that does not necessarily imply that there is an absolute decrease in the magnitude of variable capital. The weight of variable capital in the capital consumed may be relatively decreasing, but the total mass of variable capital may be increasing.

So, in this what is going to appear are precisely two things that we were talking about before, which distort the expression: with the duration of the constant working day and the intensity of the work given, what is going to happen with the absolute movement of variable capital? And what one has to take into account is that what appears here are quantitative relations between movements of portions of social capital, because it is the mass of living labor that it requires... what is going to happen to the working population, is this. So, what does it depend on, in this movement, how variable capital grows? The relationship that appears is between

how fast total capital grows and how fast the technical composition grows. Do you understand why? If the technical composition does not change, the rate at which the total variable capital grows is the same as the rate at which the total capital grows. But if the technical composition of the total capital increases, then a relatively larger and larger portion will be constant capital instead of variable capital. And consequently, variable capital is not going to grow at the rate of total capital, but it is going to grow more slowly in direct proportion to how the technical composition of capital grows. That is, the growth of the technical composition of capital pulls down the speed of growth of variable capital.

And what is it that appears here? What appears is that the speed of growth of the technical composition depends on the absolute magnitude of the total capital. What we saw before is that the productivity of labor is increased through cooperation, the division of labor, there is economization of means of production, technological application of science... The social character of labor is developed. And the more this develops, the more the technical composition of capital grows. Thus, the accumulation of capital itself brings with it the growth of the technical composition. The development of the bases of the production of relative surplus value all involve the increase of this technical composition. And therefore, the more capital accumulation grows, the more the technical composition grows, and the more the proportion of variable capital decreases relatively.

And here, Marx is going to refer to what is the way in which all this development takes place. It is produced through the development of the capitalist mode of production. And therefore, to the extent that individual capitals are transformed into organs of social production, organs of collective production, which are the property of individual capitalists. And therefore, the production of means of production and of means of subsistence is increasingly taking the form of the process of growth of individual capitals. And only through development in the capitalist form, he says, can this development of large-scale production take place. And here he is going to make the observation that in order to start this process a certain mass of capital must have been accumulated that would allow this work to be set in motion on the basis of collective work.

In contrast to the simple production of commodities, where there are independent private producers, private owners of their means of production, these by themselves cannot become the bearers of a development of a production that has within each unit of production the character of a social process, because they can only dispose of their own labor power. not of other people's labor power that they buy. And so, what he is going to propose is that the starting point of this movement of capital must have implied a certain accumulation that is not the result of the movement of capital. And here this reference to primitive accumulation is going to appear for the first time, because once it has happened, the forms of capital accumulation are all products of capital. Capital is in itself the product of labor, it is private property over the product of the unpaid labor of others. And from there it moves on its own, so to speak, it reproduces itself on this basis.

What did we see when we started? How surplus value arises from capital. But when we began to look at the process of reproduction, what we saw is how capital arises from surplus value. Well, from there, this is the movement of the capitalist mode of production itself. Before this movement, there had to be a capital that was not simply accumulated surplus value, which had another source. And here what now appears is the product of the movement of capital itself. It is the capitalist mode of production that engenders what is going to happen with the accumulation of capital. He is going to summarize it by saying: with the accumulation of capital the capitalist mode of production develops, and what the capitalist mode of production does is to promote the accumulation of capital. Do you want to raise something?

Javiera: I had a question written down here. It seems to me that this part is key because it points to a central element from which one can begin to elaborate a critique of all these proposals that arise from Harvey and onwards, these authors more or less linked to the perspective of extractivism, etc., who vindicate Marx's concept of primitive accumulation. Because there Marx points out what you were saying... Harvey and they constantly claim it as a historical result, very different from the starting point that Marx puts forward here, which is like a historical basis of capitalist production. And for me that is what allows them to continually say that with each leap in the advance of the productive forces there is a new process of primitive accumulation, which is when the *boom* of the [¿? – 1:07:23] occurs, which they reveal as if there is again a process of original accumulation, as if it were constantly appearing totally abstracted from its historical origin.

JIC: Yes. I'd say let's leave it for when we see the... So far Marx is like: well, there must have been this process, the original capital came from somewhere, but once this was set in motion, this is the product of itself. And it does not go beyond this. Let's see later when we look at the chapter on primitive accumulation to what extent that type of... Because we are going to see it there, in the very movement of that primitive accumulation, if one can speak of primitive accumulation again as a process that is renewed or if what is appearing is already the product of the reproduction of capital, a form of the reproduction of capital. So let's leave it pending for now.

I don't know if there is anything else that you want to raise, because now comes a question that is going to lead to the forms that accumulation is taking, which refers to how the accumulation of capital itself is what engenders, carries the development of the capitalist mode of production, and that development of the capitalist mode of production enhances the movement of accumulation of individual capitals.

So, what is going to be posed is: what is individual capital? It is a certain concentration of the means of production, to which, in turn, corresponds a certain more or less large mass of workers. And every accumulation serves as a means for the new accumulation. And consequently, every time this individual capital functions, what it does is to convert itself into a greater concentration of capital, of means of production and of labor power. And this concentration of capital is a condition for being able to sustain the same movement of capital on the basis of

the production of... For individual capitals, the question we had of extraordinary surplus value, what it entails is the production of relative surplus value. And then, what is going to appear is: each individual capital, each time, its own valorization, its valorized reproduction, makes it a greater concentration. This greater concentration is the condition for being able to increase the productivity of the labor of the workers of this individual capital and to be able to develop the conditions of capitalist production. To be able to apply science requires larger concentrations of capital, requires the large scale of production, etc.

And so, what one has on the one hand is that in this process of concentration of capital, individual capitals are growing. And the total capital of society is an ever-increasing accumulation of individual capitals, each of them ever larger. This entails a process, within each individual capital, of the socialization of labor, a scientifically governed unit of social labor. And so, here we are advancing in the conscious organization of a process of social labor within individual capitals, but the development of the contradiction that is this socialization of private labor appears. But what Marx is going to point out next is that at the same time that this is happening, the opposite movement is taking place, the indirect regulation of social production expands because it fragments: new individual capitals appear that are no longer encompassed by the old capital, fragments of the original capitals are separated, they begin to act as independent capitals... And in this sense there is an increase in indirect regulation established through the process of production and the exchange of commodities.

So, there is this contradictory movement. Just as there is a process of growth of individual capitals where the production process is directly organized with a social character, there is a multiplication of capitals where that capacity to consciously govern the production processes is fragmented. So, there is an increasing concentration of the social means of production by each individual capitalist, which depends on the degree of development of the mass of social production, because in order to increase the scale of production it is necessary to have a greater concentration; and operating with a greater concentration encloses a greater mass of product, then all social wealth must be multiplied; and at the same time this fragmented process appears that Marx is going to synthesize by saying: here there is a movement of repulsion of many individual capitals among themselves. Concentration, then, at the same time, carries with it the opposing movement of the dispersion of capital, the multiplication of individual capitals, and consequently the fragmentation of processes, of the social process of production. Is this clear?

Now, what is going to reappear is that, against this repulsion of individual capitals, there is going to emerge a process of attraction, a development of the socialization of private labor that does not respond simply to the accumulation of the surplus value generated by adding to the body of capital that is in function – therefore, the possibility of putting into operation means of production and labor power associated with those increased means of production. rather, it is the concentration of independent individual capitals that already exist, which cease to be independent of each other and constitute a single individual capital. They lose their individual autonomy, their autonomy is accumulated in a single capital, and

the expression of the "expropriation of some capitalists by others" will appear, of the union of many small capitals to form a larger capital. And then, it is no longer only a difference in how social labor is allocated, it is no longer the possibility of total capital to grow because an individual capital grows, but here at a stroke there is an individual capital that appears to be engendered through the union of individual capitals that already existed. And this, Marx says, is not a simple concentration, it is not a simple accumulation of capital: it is a process of centralization of capital. Individual capitals that were in several hands become a single individual capital.

Edgardo: [...] in the edition of Siglo XXI, in footnotes they say that in the 1st and 2nd editions of Capital Marx still did not differentiate the term "concentration" from "centralization"; It is in the 3rd and 4th editions that "decentralization" properly speaks, as opposed to accumulation and concentration.

JIC: Indeed, everything is always as "concentration" first. The 3rd edition is published after Marx's death by Engels on the basis of a copy that Marx had with the notes of corrections on the 2nd edition, of things he had produced after the 2nd edition was published. So thank you for making me remember.

Edgardo: But then, the terms would be, at least for Marx, synonymous.

JIC: Accumulation and concentration appear as synonyms. What happens is that one can look at concentration and centralization as two forms of accumulation. There "accumulation" and "concentration" are used as if they were synonymous. Why do these differences appear? There is a difference between concentration and centralization with respect to what happens with the accumulation of an individual capital and the total capital of society.

In concentration an individual capital grows and at the same time the total capital of society grows, because there is a mass of surplus value that has become new capital, it is an individual capital that did not exist before, it is a total capital that did not exist before either. In the case of centralization, individual capital grows at the more or less painful expense of individual capitalists, such as the fact that several individual capitalists associate with each other to constitute a single individual capitalist. Marx is going to make some reference in Volume 3 to the fact that it can be an individual capitalist, it can be a society of capitalists, a collective capitalist, whose property is socialized, within that individual capital property has a social character because there are several capitalists. Then, in all development, what appears is an individual capitalist, it does not matter if it is an individual or a collective of individuals. But in the case of centralization, the size of an individual capital grows but the total capital of society does not grow, because they were all capitals that already existed and that come together to form a single individual capital; So, from the point of view of the total capital of society there is no accumulation. What this individual capital is going to have is a much greater power to accumulate at once than it would have had if each of them had continued to convert its surplus value separately from the others; now all together they have a capacity to produce surplus value that is much greater than that of the sum of each of them. So, I would rather take it to mean that accumulation has two forms: one is

concentration, the other is centralization. But that's on me, I clarify. Marx makes this differentiation, but later it will not appear as a differentiation.

Javiera: With what you said, centralization is clear to me. In fact, I realized that I had the wrong idea, because at some point I thought that the social capital of society grew with centralization. But it is not clear to me what concentration would be.

JIC: It is the transformation of surplus value into new capital. It is a body of capital that generated a new mass of surplus value. Now he takes that new mass of surplus value and makes it a part of his body. That's concentration in the simplest terms. One can then say: there is also concentration if capital *A* generated surplus value and capital *B* takes that surplus value in some form and reincorporates it into its body. In concentration the total capital of society always increases, because there was a surplus value that did not exist before, and now it has been converted into new capital. In the other case, it was all capital that already existed, but which now acquires a power to generate new surplus value that none of them had in isolation, [...] and now it is going to begin to generate multiplied surplus value and turn it into a body of its own, or it will continue to centralize, gathering more and more power for production. [...]

There are several issues that, I want to emphasize, is the development that Marx follows; But there is a first issue which is the expression he uses when he speaks of centralization, which he says of "expropriation of some capitalists by others". Here only the phrase will appear, but it is the abolition of the capitalist class within the capitalist mode of production itself. Someone who was a capitalist, disappeared as a capitalist at the hands of another capitalist, so it is the claim of the capitalist class that at the same time what it is doing is liquidating itself. This is an observation that is put that way, but for me it has a substantial relevance in that it implies the abolition of the capitalist class itself acting as the personification of capital.

When one looks at this process of centralization, in concrete forms it has different expressions. What I said before: it can be more or less an association on an equal footing between individual capitals, it can be one that eats another, it can be one that surrenders to the other before they eat it... All these forms appear, and even, in order to be able to concentrate, the scale of the production process may imply that some of the individual capitals directly centralize it in order to liquidate it, so that its material body disappears, in order to be able to incorporate into a material body, which is a concentration of capital whose scale of production requires that the production of this other one has disappeared.

So, one can stop and look at all the concrete forms that this process of centralization of capital has. Marx says that he will not develop the laws of the development of this centralization, but that he will give some references to them. And then, where does the possibility of advancing some capitals over others that produce the same as them come from? It is a problem of competition and competition requires the cheapening of commodities and the cheapening of commodities requires the increase in the productivity of labor, and the increase in the productivity of labor requires the increase of scale. Then the older ones are

evicting the younger ones. And just as it increases with the development of capitalist production, so does the mass of minimum capital that must be put to function as individual capital. And then, there is a reference to the fact that the capitals that are not able to keep up with the competition, go to branches where large industry is not yet fully developed. And he says: this struggle always ends with the defeat of the small capitalists, the largest capital eats them up, it defeats them in competition.

And a determination is going to appear that until now has been absent from all development, and will continue to be absent, saying that credit is the most powerful weapon that is developed in competition, and it is the most powerful mechanism for the centralization of capital. So, the same thing that is this repulsion of capital, the emergence of new capitals and the fragmentation of independent capitals, is what multiplies the power of the centralization of capital. Competition is multiplied, here credit is going to be added, and those are the two most powerful levers for the centralization of capital.

He will continue with these determinations of centralization, of the forms it takes, stating that, just as the concentration of individual capitals increases with the whole development of accumulation, the mass of individual capitals increases and the need for an increase in the scale of individual production increases, the need and the bases of the centralization of capital multiply. And now what appears is what happens with the magnitude of the total capital of society with respect to centralization, that centralization differs from concentration, this is where it says "reproduction on an expanded scale". And it appears that centralization can take place by changing ownership over existing capitals without affecting the total capital of society. Is there anything about this? Because now he is going to return to this question and to the expropriation of some capitalists by others. But apart from the fact that I am already half melted, I would propose that we take this up again, and I am going to propose next time to look at something that goes beyond the development that Marx is doing here. If they agree, we look at it, if they don't agree, we continue with this. But I would like to be able to start with what follows now.

[The Centralization of Capital and the Political Organization of the Working Class]

Is there anything from last time that you want us to come back to discuss? We had reached the middle, more or less, of the development of the centralization of capital. We had the contrast with concentration. Concentration is the accumulation of surplus value, increases individual capital and increases the total capital of society; Centralization is that from independent capitals a single capital is formed, consequently there is a capital of magnitude multiplied at a single stroke, and the magnitude of the total capital of society was not altered because they were all existing capitals. The other issue we have seen is that this process appears as a process of abolition of the capitalist class by the capitalist class itself: there are some capitalists who eat others, consequently there is an abolition of private property that at the same time is a reaffirmation of private property. If this is what we are with, then I am going to take it up again.

What we had were the vehicles that allowed us to accelerate the centralization of capital, the role of competition, in particular the role of credit, which until now is simply a reference. What follows from what we have seen is: accumulation itself multiplies the capital available to be centralized, multiplies individual capitals and the space for centralization; and, at the same time, it creates conditions that make centralization necessary, because the size of the solvent social need expands, the means of production are developed that can only be put to work on a large scale, which requires a multiplication of the masses of centralized capital.

There is again something that I wanted to tell you before, which was the contrast of concentration and centralization. [...]. When we began to look at the capitalist mode of production, it appeared up to this point that there was only one way to appropriate for free, in this case it was the product of other people's labor, which was the exploitation of workers by capital, but here a new form of free appropriation appears, in this case, not of the product of other people's labor. but of the capital of others, of some capitalists for others. And Marx is going to sum this up by saying that if capital increases in gigantic proportions in one hand, it is because many hands are deprived of their capital. So, what appears is a first step in the abolition of the capitalist class, but practiced by the capitalist class itself. We had talked about how the forms of the centralization of capital can involve from associations, forming a capitalist society, a collective capitalist, to the immediate dispossession without any counterpart of the capital of a capitalist, of some capitalists by others. When Marx continues to advance, what he is going to ask is what are the limits of the centralization of capital.

Here, what Marx is going to propose is, considering the fragmentation of capital into different branches, a single individual capital in each branch, and the absolute limit of the centralization of capital is the total capital of society converted into a single capital, all social capital becomes the property of a single individual capitalist or of a collective capitalist society. If we consider an absolute centralization where there is only one individual capital, what we are going to have is that individual capital is immediately the same as the total capital of society, which (Marx is not going to put it in these terms, but I am going to put it) implies

that the administrative management of that individual capital is immediately the same as the political management of the total capital of society. And so what I wanted to propose to you, which goes beyond the development that Marx makes, is to ask about a development of the process of centralization of capital that entails the abolition of this only capitalist who had been left with the absolute centralization of capital.

Because a capital that is absolutely centralized is a single unit of production, in that process no means of production has the form of a commodity because everything moves within this capital. The surplus value that the capitalist is going to spend on his individual consumption is also the direct owner of those use values, so they would not need to take the form of a commodity either. The commodity that would remain would be labor power. And we must always remember that capital, its general, generic movement, needs the labor power of free individuals. And then we would have an immediate direct unity in the production process, but the unity between social production and consumption would still be absent. It would still be a production that is set in motion, not with the immediate purpose of producing use-values for human life, but with the immediate purpose of multiplying capital.

The question that opens up this potentiality or that possibility is whether the full expression of this absolute centralization of capital, which appears as a process of centralization of the ownership of capital, could not take shape through a socialization of ownership over this single individual capital. And the presence, in what we saw before, of this figure of the collective capitalist. And the question I want to put to you beyond this is whether this collective capitalist could not at the same time be the working class, where capital remains the general social relation, where the implementation of social production has as its immediate object the multiplication of capital, and at the same time this capital has been absolutely centralized as a directly social property. If it is centralized as a directly social property, there can no longer be difference, separation between capitalists and workers, the absolute centralization of capital implies the abolition of the capitalist as capitalist, therefore the ownership of that capital as a directly social and directly social property in this movement implies only the existence of the working class. So, I cut this short and ask you if you want us to move away from the development that Marx is making and stop to look at what determinations this movement would carry and if there are historical experiences in this sense, what historical forms it can take, or if we continue with the point that Marx reaches, which is a collective capitalist but who is separated from the working class.

[Sounds good to them]

So, I try to put it in these terms. It is the process of centralization of capital in the fullest expression of that process. We have already seen how capital is wresting from the capitalists the function of personification of capital, how this is passing into the body of the collective worker. And now that we are talking about the centralization of capital, that collective worker becomes immediate: it is the working class. The figure of the capitalist loses its historical right to exist. And this centralization of capital as directly social property, which implies the ownership of

the working class, would be the most powerful form of the process of capital accumulation. It is obvious that this centralization of capital as the property of the working class implies the abolition of the capitalist class: it can only take the form of a social revolution in which we have capitalists and workers (there is the landowning class, which will later appear), but socialization, the directly social ownership of any means of production, it implies the abolition of the capitalist class. Therefore, what one has as the personifying subject of this process of absolute centralization of capital, is the working class as a political subject.

I had told you before that with this absolute centralization the political management of the total capital of society is the same as the management of individual capital. Competition between capitals is no longer the way to govern the movement of capital, now the way to govern the movement of capital is the centralized movement of that single capital. But it is still capital and therefore confronts the workers, who are no longer only the producers of capital, but are its owners, as an objectified social power that dominates them and in which they continue to be alienated. It is not the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, it is taking the movement of the capitalist mode of production to the extreme of the socialization of private labor. This would be absolute socialization, but labor remains private, there is no immediate unity between production and social consumption. As this is a social relation that continues to be alienated, the ownership of capital and the management of capital itself confront the workers as an alien power that dominates them, and then the legal form of ownership over this absolutely centralized capital is the property of the state, the political representative of social capital is the one who represents the legal figure of ownership over capital. Who is the manager of the state? Since political management is the same as the administration of individual capital, it is the political organization, the political party of the working class, that is charged with the management of absolutely centralized capital. This would be the very rough synthesis of what this absolute centralization of capital as the property of the working class would imply.

When we look at the chapter on accumulation without production of relative surplus value, we mention the question of the political action of the working class, and whether developing the accumulation of capital without changing the technical composition of capital implied an increase in the demand for labour power that could even exceed the increase in the working population and bring with it an increase in wages above the value of labour power. And what we saw is that this accumulation in these conditions leads to the reestablishment of the movement of capital, throwing the wage, at most, to the value of the labor power. So here it appears, as equivalent to that, whether the political action of the working class to centralize capital as a directly social property under the juridical form of state property is a form of political action in which the working class is a way to overcome the capitalist mode of production.

It is not the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production: the general social relation remains capital. Alienation takes this form that I have just proposed: one is confronted with the product of one's own labor, made with one's own means of production as a member of the working class, which at the same time confronts

one as a social power that cannot be controlled. The question that arises, then, is whether or not the advance in this direction is a course in the advance of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production by the action of the working class. In the general determination, I think I have not forgotten anything I wanted to raise, but I do not know if you want to raise something.

Javiera: Juan, it is not very clear to me, I cannot imagine what it would be like for the party of the working class to be in charge of absolute centralization, what would that imply? I mean, if the general social relationship remains the same. I don't know if you can go a little deeper into that.

JIC: It would be to take to the limit – but not to overcome – the contradiction that is present in the socialization of private labor. The purity of social labor done privately is private ownership of one's own individual means of production. That is the absolute form of social labor in the form of private labor. The capitalist mode of production, with what we have seen so far, is the development of the socialization of that private labor. The socialization of private labor leads to the centralization of capital, as an abstract limit is the absolute centralization of capital.

When we look at the capitalist, Marx makes a reference to the historical right he has to exist: he is the private organizer of social labor done privately and independently. When we look at the development of relative surplus value in large-scale industry, what we had is that the capitalist loses these functions. It becomes a pure social parasite. Well, the fullness of the development of the productive forces capable of entering into the capitalist mode of production, the social parasite consumes surplus value, hinders movement, the overcoming of this parasite is the absolute centralization of capital as a directly social property. When one says that it is a directly social property, there is no more individual private property left with respect to that capital, it implies the abolition of the capitalist class, because the only members of society that remain are the members of the working class. Now, what is the concrete form of this abolition? That abolition implies the disappearance of individual private property, the annihilation of that social parasite along with the landowner who is *always* a social parasite. This has the form of a social revolution, but it does not go beyond the capitalist mode of production, but what it does is bring it to the fullness of its powers, which is this absolute centralization of capital as a directly social property. Is it up to there?

So, managing that individual capital is the same as managing the social capital. When we saw social capital and individual capital, we said: the state is the political representative of the total capital of society. Who is in charge of the management of the state? The only thing that remained is the working class. The political management of social capital, which is the same as administrative management because it is absolutely centralized, is the political organization of the working class. This is what is up to here. What forms does this political organization have, and so on? I'm not going any further than that, but that political organization is the political party of the working class, and the abolition of the capitalist class and the landlord class takes shape in the class struggle, and the organization of the action of the working class in the class struggle in the political organization of the working class.

Javiera: I have a question about the above, but I think it is still linked to this. In centralization, does the power of a process of production lie in which science takes a more finished form?

JIC: It depends on what you call "a more finished form," but the whole organization of production, now directly as a process of social production, is necessarily governed by science.

Javiera: And the consciousness of the working class, that is, of the party of the working class?

JIC: It is still an alienated consciousness. While there is capital... I put it the other way around: the working class is an attribute of capital. Therefore, if there is a working class, it is because there is capital. And the correct order is: because there is capital, there is a working class, and that working class sets in motion social labour as an immediate unit, not having as its aim the production of use-values for human life, but the multiplication of the capacity to set this social labour in motion.

Iván: And Juan, how do you understand the class struggle when it is the working class that leads the process of accumulation? It is no longer a working-class-capitalist struggle.

JIC: No, what we already had there was that, even when there was no absolute centralization of capital, when the capitalist ceases to fulfill the role of personification in functions of capital and that place is occupied by sellers of labor power, the antagonistic relationship between buyer and seller of labor power enters into the working class. It is a contradiction that now, what was typical of the class struggle, which was that the buyer is at one pole and the seller is at the other pole, now at the pole of the sellers there are also the buyers.

Javiera: But that was a relationship that already existed, it was already where it was...

JIC: Here one could say that it reaches the fullness of development. Because there are some who personify capital throughout the structure of production, and there are others who do not, or who... I am going to put it in these terms that are not correct, but they are "less potent" personifications of capital, because they are lower on the scale, their condition of personifying capital has a scope more limited to those who have the management of the unity of that total capital of society. And there is the antagonistic relationship. It is not that the antagonism disappeared, but now it is inside the body of this working class without a capitalist class.

Javiera: But then, it is not possible to advance in what we have been postponing all the time regarding who embodies scientific work?

JIC: Well, we didn't postpone it any longer, I think, what we already had... That it is the working class that is in charge of scientific work as an attribute of capital. I already thought that... But if you want to come back to that, no problem.

Xatan: What do you mean class struggle without a capitalist class? Can you elaborate on that in depth? I think you said that, but I don't know if I lack development, I haven't understood much how you come to that conclusion.

JIC: When you look at it, there is no class struggle, there is struggle within the working class, antagonistic relations. There is a relationship of solidarity, which was what we saw as a form of competition, and at the same time there is competition between workers for who sells their labor power and there is an antagonistic relationship between buyer and seller of labor power. There is no more capitalist class or landowner, strictly there is no class struggle, but what there is is an antagonistic relationship within the working class. And one of the things that did not disappear then in this movement is the exercise of coercion that was incorporated into the body of the collective worker.

Xatan: I still don't understand why this capitalist class is suddenly left out; that is, I understand that it is said that within the working class capitalist interests are incarnated, insofar as they perform the functions of capital accumulation, since it is part of this management of the company or the production of private media. But in this sense it still exists, that is, it is not something abstract, that is, I do not understand why I would suddenly talk about the fact that there is no class struggle with respect to the capitalist class, when these interests are concretely embodying that capitalist class, it is not outside that content. I still don't understand why he alienates himself from the capitalist class, I don't understand how he separates himself from it.

JIC: Because the proposal is: in this process of centralization of capital, capital becomes a directly social property, there is no individual capitalist who owns a part of the capital, now capital is a property of society under the legal form of state property. So, it has as a condition to reach that point, to have liquidated the capitalist class, that is why there is no more capitalist class that the working class faces. But what continues to happen is that the working class confronts its own interior: it has antagonistic relations of competition and of personifying labor power, and at the same time of personifying capital, inside its body. Only the working class remained, but the working class is burdened with antagonistic relations. The whole of society, the only class that remained, therefore the only individuals that exist in that society, are members of the working class, and as members of the working class they have antagonistic relations. And since at the same time they personify capital, they have the antagonistic relationship of being sellers of labor power and at the same time being buyers of labor power.

Xatan: Okay, let's see, we're talking about the case in which all the social capital is centralized in society as a whole, right?

JIC: Exactly.

Xatan: Okay, but from that perspective, then, why does it continue to occur? If society as a whole organizes social production, how can this contradiction be possible? If there is a contradiction, the interests are opposed at some point, then

we cannot say that the whole of society is organizing social production. That is, not all of society has the same interest with respect to social production. That is why we would talk about that management, those directors, etc., that you say continue to alternate antagonistic social relations with each other, but I do not understand in that sense how it is possible to talk about centralization in that way when there is that antagonism within the class itself. I do not understand the socialization of all social production when this "class struggle" still exists, even if we pose it in terms of only the proletarian class itself.

JIC: Because here there is no unity between production and social consumption. What governs the implementation of social production is capital. It is this capacity to initiate social labor with the immediate purpose of multiplying the capacity to initiate social labor. Overcoming this implies that there is an immediate unity between production and consumption. And here what we are proposing is a situation in which there is not yet that unity. You don't just produce use values, which would imply that capital disappeared and the working class disappeared. And now this is a society of individuals who govern their process of social life where each one immediately recognizes himself in his condition as an individual organ of that process of social life, but this remains the capitalist relation, the relation of capital.

I am now going to give an example, with many caveats, because it is not an absolute socialization of capital, but rather socializations of fragments of the total capital of society. But for me there is an example of this process of centralization, in a narrow scope, of absolute centralization of capital as property of the working class under the legal form of state ownership, where the political organization of the working class is the one that manages the total capital of society. And therefore, the political organization of the working class has to exert coercion on... I'm not going to say "the rest" because it depends, one is taking it in very general terms, but in the organization of social labor, it exerts coercion on itself and exerts coercion on the rest of the working class. That is the situation. The other would be to have overcome the capitalist mode of production. And what I am proposing is the full development of the capitalist mode of production, the development, so to speak, "absolute" of this contradiction.

It is full socialization, but work remains private, there is no unity between production and social consumption, there is no immediate unity. So, in some way, it has to be governed how each member of society is assigned what specific useful work he or she is going to do. That way of allocating is the movement of capital, it is producing surplus value. And this production of surplus value is to set social labor in motion with the immediate purpose of multiplying the capacity to set social labor in motion. This implies a power for the development of the productive forces of social labor superior to that of the simple capitalist mode of production where private property over the means of production rules, but at the same time it is all the laws proper to the capitalist mode of production. It remains a consciousness that sees itself as free because it is alienated in capital. Maybe if we advance in a little bit in this concrete forms will appear that one can associate with what one takes. Well, let's look at concrete forms of this and come back to this general question.

Of the forms that appear of the transformation of capitalist private property into the property of the working class, there is a type of form, with many varieties, which does not encompass a social revolution or the ownership of capital under the juridical form of state property, but which does transform the ownership of capital into the property of portions of the working class. One of those expressions – for me more visible in this way – is what happened in... I have data from 20 years ago and I don't know what happened later, because some things changed in the formation of capital and this must have changed. But retirement and pension funds, which are part of the value of the labor force... In the United States there is a very different structured retirement, at least from what we Argentines are used to seeing; I think that in Chile it is not exactly like here, and here at times it was not exactly like it is now. But the formation of the retirement fund is a part of the value of labor power, because it is a worker from whom capital demands such an intensity of labor that the day he is no longer in a position to perform that intensity, his natural life still continues, because if on that day his individual life is exhausted, the day before he would not have been able to sustain the intensity that is demanded of him. So, since that individual is no longer going to have labor power with the productive attributes that capital demands, in order to have developed those productive attributes, to have applied them to production during what is his useful life for capital, he has to have the means of subsistence for the remainder of his natural life. If he did not have them, that individual would have to take a part of what is his current wage, not consume it, save it for when he has no more labor power to sell. And in that case, since his current wage would only be the value of his labour-power in its immediate reproduction, he would have to consume less means of subsistence than corresponds to the value of his labour-power. And he would not be in a position to work with the intensity, with the productive attributes that capital demands of that worker. Thus, retirement funds are a part of the value of the labor power of workers who have already worked.

The historical reality is that, to a large extent, in many countries (in Argentina this is the case) these retirement funds have been annihilated... The discourse of "intergenerational solidarity" appears, which is the ideological endorsement of the emptying of the retirement funds of previous generations. Because the worker during which he was active, throughout his active life he formed the fund with which they should now pay. Therefore, it is not that when he finishes working, the worker who is now active has to pay his retirement.

Well, in the United States, some retirement and pension funds have that structure. The worker builds up the fund as he works, with contradictions such as that he forms it by contributing that part of the value of his labor power to the capital of the company for which he works, the company goes bankrupt and is left without its retirement fund. The American labor statistics have a particularly perverse fact, which is that only those who are registered are listed. In Argentina, in Chile, in Mexico, everywhere, the so-called "informal work" appears in labor statistics. In the employment in the United States, as far as I could see (because I was surprised, I was convinced that it had informal workers), it only includes formal workers. So, it appears in these retirement and pension funds, it was in 2001 the data, I think, that something like 30-40% of the capital of the 1000 largest

companies in the United States that are listed on the stock exchange belonged to the retirement and pension funds. Then a form of ownership of fragments of the working class appears, not only because of national separation, but also because not all workers in the United States have these conditions, by any means. It does not, to this extent, contain a social revolution, but it shows how the workers who own that capital confront that capital as a social power that they cannot control.

For me, the synthetic expression of this was an article that I no longer know where I read it, and with the bad habit of not saving and not annotating, I lost it and I can only say it from memory, with a very peculiar approach. You have to think that this is also from 2001, it is when the Chinese industry began to expand very rapidly. The proposal that appeared in the article (it was even stated in terms of the 1st person because it was an individual who was in these conditions), said: we are the owners of this capital. So, what we have to do is instruct the managers of the retirement and pension funds so that in the shareholders' meetings they refuse to send production processes outside the United States, to China, because that capital, which is ours, is leaving us without work. So we have to prohibit that capital from leaving. Concrete experience says that capital left without any kind of problem because the power of accumulation was in China, and even if it is the private property of the working population – you have to think that if it is 30-40% of the total of the thousand largest, some must be much higher proportions. These workers cannot confront the capital that belongs to them and ensure that instead of leaving them without work it benefits them, the demand is that it at least exploits them and not others. So, for me this is one of the expressions.

The other expression that for me is the one that most clearly shows the extent of this absolute centralization of capital as the property of the working class, is the case of the Soviet Union. Where they are not the power of the universal movement of capital, they are an expression of the powers that capital has in a national space. A national process of capital accumulation that, to put it in very broad terms, appeared under the figure of the most "backward" in Europe, it must be considered that in Russia, serfdom was abolished in the decade, if I remember correctly, of 1860, which is the same period in which the abolition of slavery was made in the United States. Until that moment it was still a country essentially of agricultural production, what there was was a relationship of lord-serf. And it is a national space that has an enormous mass of population that can potentially be transformed into a working population for industrial production, that has within its national space a number of natural conditions that can be converted into means of production for the development of industrial production, that the working population that it has is an illiterate population that comes from agricultural production. A transformation is taking place in the productive technique of the industry, which is the development of the manual assembly line, where there is no longer a need for workers with a high development of their productive attributes.

I think we already talked about it: the original initial assembly structure of the cars of the automotive industry, which came from the carriage industry, was a master worker with a team of auxiliary workers, specialized in some tasks, but to become the master capable of assembling the car, years of experience were required. The assembly line makes it possible to put workers who do not even

know the national language, who are illiterate, who have never worked in industry and who are capable of working fully. [...] he had mentioned it in the case of the assembly line at the Ford company: at the beginning of that assembly line, something like 80% of the workers were fully capable of working after a day's work.

And what Russia then has is a working population potentially with these conditions, and with what are called exceptional "natural resources." And with another attribute: it has a scale within it, a mass of population such and such a scale that it is a historical stage in which the national processes of capital accumulation that are presented as more powerful, operate essentially by selling in their internal market. They sell on the world market, but the key is the development of the domestic market. So, it brings together these powers, and at the same time it has a history of strongly hierarchical social organization, strongly with a structure of discipline, and at the same time it has a development of individual capitals, it has all the agricultural production to feed that working population that it can expand. And it has a political form that is still the expression of the remnants of feudal relations, it is a capitalist development but extremely limited.

And the only way for this national process of capital accumulation to express the fullness of its powers is by centralizing that capital as directly social property, by abolishing the capitalist class, the landowning class, which had a significant weight in the organization of social production, by transforming that mass of peasants into industrial workers. transforming into means of production all that mass of natural conditions potentially usable in social production. And the only way to carry out this process is the absolute centralization of capital, and the only subject that can carry out this centralization is the political party of the working class, which is not the great mass of the working population of Russia, but which is the one that has the attributes proper to capitalist production. And so, what one has in front of one is a process of absolute centralization of capital under the legal form of state ownership, with the constitution of the Soviet Union. None of the countries of Western Europe had this power. You take Germany, France, even Italy, England, and they had more developed national processes of capital accumulation than Russia. And at the same time, they do not have the scale or the natural conditions that Russia has, which would allow them to express all the potential that this centralization of capital gives. If you like, then I will refer to the political forms.

There is another national space of capital accumulation that has two attributes similar to Russia and an attribute that is not similar to that of Russia: it is that of the United States, which has just finished its territorial expansion at the expense of annihilating the original population, the population that was linked to another national space such as that of Mexico. and appropriating the territory. It has a territory full of natural conditions ready to be put into production, because until then they were not in production. It has potentially a very large scale of the domestic market, but it does not have that mass of the working population available. So, it is going to look for that mass of working population in a population that has the same attributes as the Russian peasant: illiterates, peasants – as we

have not seen so far, this corresponds to the development of the surplus working population, but let's take it – and it is going to incorporate them from Italy, it already incorporated them from England, Ireland, Spain, etc. from Italy, Turkey, China, Japan... And it is going to put them to work on the manual assembly line, where it is not necessary for one worker to speak the same language as the other worker, but they are in a position to be put in this process.

And they are two national processes of capital accumulation that, in the final analysis, are based on the same thing, but since one has the population inside and the other has to attract it, their political forms (and also the concrete histories of the occupation of the territories and so on), because of their concrete forms cannot have... One has the form of an absolute centralization of capital, the other has the form of a very violent centralization of capital within each branch, contemporaneous with the eve of the formation of the Soviet Union, and then it follows. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the United States is the largest domestic market for beer, there is only one capital that produces beer, there is only one capital that produces cookies and baked commodities. There is only one capital that produces steel. So, there is a very strong process of centralization of capital, but within each branch there is the other possibility of centralization of capital, which is what is called vertical centralization: to centralize with a supplier of means of production, to centralize with a consumer of the means of production that is produced.

So, we have this process. And when one looks at the power of this centralization of capital in this national form, and only with this national scope, in its development, after a few decades it becomes the second national process of capital accumulation in the world. It went from appearing as the process of capital accumulation that revolved around agricultural production, to being the second national process in terms of industrial production. The first is the same one that has the same attributes as this one, but has this different base. What then is going to be the political party of the working class that makes the centralization of capital? That we have to consider that centralizing production is an extremely complex process, and that at the same time the instruments that exist today to be able to carry out these processes and those that existed throughout the early twentieth century, there is an abyss of potentiality. So, we aim at that absolute centralization, to be able to organize all social production with the plan.

That party that is going to take state power, is going to take political power and is going to centralize capital, has the form of a revolutionary party, and its subjects, the individuals who personify it, are individuals with a revolutionary consciousness. But now that capital is centralized, it must be put to valorization. And now the problem is that we have to manage that capital and the antagonistic relations that remained within the working class. And the one that is going to manage this is a political party above all of a bureaucratic nature. It has to administer that capital, and it is going to apply all the brutality that is typical of the management of capital, because it is going to have antagonistic relations with the rest, or with the different "moments", so to speak, of the working class, which is typical of those who manage capital with the potentialities that it has. So, you're

going to use the same methods that capital uses anywhere. First I make an observation.

There is a painting, a photograph I think it is, I don't remember if it was of the first Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, from 1917. From that photo, 20 years later only 2 were left alive: Trotsky – who was exiled a short time later – and Stalin. All the others, for natural reasons, because they were old people – as is the case with Lenin – or because of the purges, have disappeared from the Soviet and from natural life. And what this shows is that what centralized capital now no longer has a role to play, now another type of personification is needed. What things are going to seem peculiar about this? The ideological discourse will appear that the capitalist mode of production has been overcome here, that now there is a directly social production, and that this is the production of use values for the working class. And then, what will later be called "moral coercion" appears[299], the identification of the worker with that capital that is centralized for its own immediate interest. And then, there is the case of ~~Stajanovic~~ [Stakhanov], a mining worker, who I never remember exactly what he did, but something like in one day he extracted, I don't know if it was coal or ore, which was a week's production (I once saw something for a month, but I think it's impossible for a human being). You have to think that this extraction was by pickaxe and by force of arms, which implies a ferocious wear and tear of labor power, a ferocious intensity of labor. And [Stakhanov] becomes a hero of the Soviet Union: there is a whole structure, an ideological discourse around Stakhanovism, organization on the basis of identification and moral stimuli, and the worker who works very intensely is given the [Stakhanov] medal.

The unions cease to be the immediate representative of the collective worker of capital to whom they sell the labor power to become organs, representatives of the organization of the process of social production, they begin to express the unity of that process as representatives of the state. And there is a peculiar form that develops in the Soviet Union of the exercise of coercion that cannot be developed where capital appears as directly private property, or can be developed with much less... Which is that when a worker tries to strike in defense of the conditions of sale of his labor power, the first thing that appears is that he is an enemy of his class. Because this is the interest of the working class, so if it wants to strike, it is the enemy of its class. But he is also an enemy of himself, because he is attacking the interests of the workers. Then the psychiatric institution appears as an organ of coercion, because an individual who attacks himself is insane. Then, he can be subject to psychiatric hospitalization until he stops attacking himself. I'm going to forget about it later, because things are missing, but I wanted to add this.

At the same time, for the national processes of capital accumulation that compete with the Soviet Union, and have become the main competitor of the rest, at least openly competent, the ideological discourse to your workers is: you have overcome the capitalist mode of production, you have made that social revolution, and you are the same or worse than you. So, do not pretend to overcome the capitalist mode of production. And if you notice, this is the discourse that continues

[299] Or "moral stimuli".

to circulate abundantly, and with the rise of the Austrian school of economics, even more so. Then this ideological discourse of the two sides appears. On the one hand, it praises itself, it says "we have overcome the capitalist mode of production", "this is socialism"... There is even a Constitution of the Soviet Union, and the fact that there is a Constitution says that work is not directly social, because the image of isolated individuals who come to constitute the state continues to appear. Not that we recognize ourselves as individual organs of this subject that is society, but that it appears as: we are subjects who come to constitute the collective subject, we are not individual organs of this subject that is, above all, collective.

So, these political forms appear. What is the clearest expression—I think we have already seen it, but I am going to raise it again—that the private character of labor subsists because there is no immediate unity with social consumption? When we saw something of the value, I think I already raised it, if not, maybe I will raise it now. Towards the end of the 40s, beginning of the 50s, he is in the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, where the main planners were, among others, Leontiev (for those who are not economists, he is considered, in this naturalization of capabilities, the father of the input-output matrix). You can see that they present a draft of the *Manual of Political Economy* to Stalin, and he replies in a letter (which I suppose must have scared them quite a bit)... I don't know what the original version of the *Manual said*, but in the letter, published under the name "The Problems of Marxism in the Soviet Union," it asks: "In the Soviet Union, do commodities exist?" And it is answered: "Yes, they exist." "Is there value?" And he answers, "Yes, there is value." "And is that good or bad?" And he says: "Neither good nor bad, but rather it is good, because that allows the planners to control, to know if they have planned well or badly." Because when commodities reach circulation, the market, if they are not sold, it is because they planned badly. And if they are sold, they planned well. And if they are sold and lacking, then they also planned badly.

So, the *Manual of Political Economy* of the USSR – which is a book of good stature, and which was what was read to all the intellectuals of the Communist Party of the time, and in all the universities of the Soviet Union this was what was studied – says: abstract labor is the physiological expenditure of the human body. In commercial societies, abstract labor produces value. And there are two forms of mercantile companies: companies where private labor rules, and societies where directly social labor rules. The societies in which private labor rules is capitalism. The societies where social labor rules is socialism. In societies where social labor rules, it is socialism. And why then is value produced and commodities produced? And he says again the same thing that Stalin said in the letter, a little more developed: because that way you know if it was planned well or not. What he is saying is that, when it was planned, there was no immediate unity with social consumption, it was not known how much social consumption was going to be. That is why it was necessary to plan and then bring this product into circulation so that the indirect unity between production and social consumption could be established through the mediation of value. Thus, the commodity society is placed before explaining the private character of work. The *Manual* says: but there are commercial companies and... This has a whole antecedent that was born with the revolution of 1917.

Xatan: Then it would not be a directly social organization, if I am not mistaken, because they have to mediate with value, obviously.

JIC: Exactly. Production is a single unit, but it is not linked to social consumption. What governs the start-up of production? The production of more capital; And that is the capitalist mode of production. I always emphasize this: this is the power that the working class has, and like everything that the working class does in the capitalist mode of production, as we have seen, it does so at the expense of itself. It centralizes capital, and that comes with the annihilation of masses of the population to transform them into industrial workers. And then we're going to look at something else. But I wanted to complete this.

When the Soviet Union began, there was a decade or so of an explosion of intellectual production in all fields, artistic production, etc. And one of the manifestations of this explosion is that the discussion arises: well, we have overcome the capitalist mode of production, there is no more value here, there are no more commodities. So, planning has to be done in terms of use values. And how to plan in use values is discussed. That presupposes the immediate unity between social production and consumption, because I have to say: this use-value that I am going to produce is for this individual to consume. I am not going to produce more or less: I am going to produce what is going to be consumed. Quickly, this intention to plan in use values is being defeated because the discussion was: no, you have to plan in value, you cannot plan in use values in socialism. And all planning in the Soviet Union was based on the unity of that to coordinate the production of value. And there were texts before, but here it is ideologically consecrated by the *Manual*.

The *Manual*, I think I must have already commented on [...], has a part that is the "Capitalist Economy", and a part that has the "Socialist Economy". In the part of the socialist economy money appears, but "it is not money, it is an instrument of planning." The salary appears, but "it is not the salary, it is an instrument of planning." Interest appears, but "it is not interest, it is a planning instrument". All the forms proper to the capitalist mode of production are instruments of planning. [...] There is a reason, a basis for which the appearance that the Soviet Union has overcome the capitalist mode of production is reinforced, that it does something that we have not seen, but that is: it does not generate surplus working population: it absorbs the working population desperately. And there are several reasons why it cannot show that it generates surplus working population.

First it is because it is growing at a very great speed, and then it absorbs accelerated workers. But the second issue is that it was born out of World War I, where there has been a significant annihilation of the Russian working population or peasants. It continues with the war against the Whites, with foreign participation, it seems like a civil war but... And there are another lot of deaths. It continues with forced collectivization, where there are another lot of deaths. It continues with the Stalinist purges, where there is another mass of deaths. And it continues with the 2nd World War, which is the working population that caused the greatest mass of deaths. Therefore, the possibility of generating that surplus working population by this double movement does not appear: accelerated growth,

permanent violent annihilation of a very significant mass of the population. Until the accumulation of capital ceases to take the form of international wars (let's see for how long but...) between equivalent national processes of capital accumulation. What is the discourse of Nazi Germany? It is a problem of living space. Who is it for? For German capital, which has arrived late to the colonial partition and needs to expand its scale. The previous ones too, but the two world wars are clearly an expression of this competition of national spaces that the size of their internal market no longer reaches them, the scales of production do not reach them compared to those of the United States and the USSR. But stop taking that form.

And the other transformation occurs, which is that of differentiation in the conditions of reproduction and sale of labor power. And what we saw in the United States of the workers saying "capital is ours, don't take it to China", which they cannot in any way resist, for the political unity of the Soviet Union it is incompatible to begin to generate masses of surplus working population and at the same time to be taking production openly in the form of capital to East Asia. So it cannot make that fragmentation of the working class that occurs in the countries of Western Europe and in the United States – which through its history of slavery and racism has very visible bases for differentiation. And then, he begins to trace technically... because it continues to produce means of production that correspond to that undifferentiated universal worker on the assembly line who begins to be displaced in competition by the assembly lines – at that time, moreover manual – first in Japan, then in Taiwan and then in South Korea, then in China, now in India, Vietnam, etc. and so on. So in the USSR, capital accumulation began to be strangled, it began to be characterized by technical backwardness in production in general. It reached the tail end in the phase in which this undifferentiated worker reaches its peak, which is the year 1974, and then the conditions for the consumption of means of subsistence in the Soviet Union begin to improve and it cannot compete by selling on the world market, it enters a process of stagnation, crisis and finally dissolution.

Who is going to be in charge of dissolving the Soviet Union? The political party of the working class. The hierarchs of the political party of the working class are going to put the capital that was directly social property in their pockets. The fiction that is going to happen is that capital is going to be distributed among all the inhabitants of the USSR, that the individual who has no one to sell labor power to has a little title to capital, the first one who is paid something is going to sell it. This is also history of forms of land grabbing in countries like Argentina, I suppose in others as well. And the former Soviet Union has masses of surplus working population, where is the working population that does the most complex work? In Russia. Where does the surplus working population go? To Russia's peripheral countries. And now it is no longer a problem of capital that is going to accumulate in Russia, because this is the capitalist mode of production, it is clear that there is a surplus working population, and this ideological representation is over. Now the ideological form is that capitalism "returned". And capitalism did not "return", it returned in a form that when one looks at it from the point of view of national unity, it is a setback to its powers. Since what is at stake is world unity, this national form could not be sustained.

There is also a... I always thought it was Sweezy, but I was looking for him in his texts and I can't find him. In the 1970s, the end of the 1960s, which is the very rapid expansion of the Soviet Union, there is a Yankee economist who calculates that by the year 1980, something like this, the USSR will have the largest per capita product in the world, greater than that of the United States, that is, the largest wealth per capita (it is supposed to measure that). By the time that was planned, the USSR no longer existed. So, one has the ideological forms there, and how can one not ask oneself critically about the process that is in front of us.

I want to just add one more thing to complete this (I know there's a lot missing). When you look at Germany, France, Italy, England... contemporaneously with the development of the USSR, what appears is that they clash with the scale they have. And here, the centralization of capital cannot reach powers like those reached by the Soviet Union. And in these countries, the centralization of capital will serve as a basis for private capital, individual or collective, to sustain the accumulation of their capital. Then there will be a partial centralization of capital as the property of the state. At the same time, this whole process occurs with a strong development of the transformations in the materiality of work that these transformations enclose in what is a worker we were looking at. By 1960-70, the assembly line workers were no longer a mass of illiterates, they were all literate individuals. And the workers who were in charge of the organization of social production were university-educated. The intensity of work that the development of large-scale industry required, and that it still requires, implied the shortening of the working day, implies the prolongation of the life of the worker so that he has the capacity to sustain that intensity; Since it took them time to develop their productive attributes, now capital wants to use it as extensively as possible. All these processes of transformation, then, of the conditions of sale to the labor force, could only be personified by the political and trade union organizations of the working class.

Since this centralization of capital as state property implies the partial abolition of private property, it could not be personified by the political parties of the capitalist class. That is why the political parties of the working class, with all the contradictions that this entails, on the one hand are going to have a marked political force (especially after the 2nd World War), because they are the ones that express where the accumulation of capital is heading. But in the countries of Western Europe, there is no room for absolute centralization, so it cannot be a revolutionary political party that poses the image of the immediate abolition of capital. What is going to appear? The social democratic political parties that propose the partial centralization of capital, the transformation of the conditions of sale of labor power, and are advancing in that direction.

In the case of the United States, the working class tries to set up parties, these parties are very violently annihilated; especially after the USSR, which becomes the national enemy, to be a socialist or communist is to be an ally of the USSR, and therefore to be an enemy of one's own nation state. What there is to be are very strong trade union organizations, because they do not consider, because of the scale of the American economy, the need to centralize the capital of the so-called "public services" to sustain the general movement of accumulation. In Europe,

when railways, electricity, water, communications, etc., are centralized, they are all capitals that are not valorized, but on the basis that they extract surplus value from their workers and give it away to the capitals of individual capitalists, these capitals can sustain their accumulation.

So, when one looks at the political forms, why the party of the organization of the working class, the revolutionary party, why the party of the bureaucrats who liquidate the property of the working class, why the reformist parties, why the non-party of the working class but very strong union organization... In my opinion, what one has to look at at the base of all this movement is what form capital accumulation takes, what material forms it takes, what scales the concentration of capital and centralization take; and consequently, what political forms it has and why at one moment the working class in a certain national process of accumulation has political strength and why at another time it loses it. The last example is both in England the New Labor and in France, Hollande: when the political organization of the working class is supposed to return to the power of the state, what it does is to soften a little the conditions that correspond to a growing differentiation of the conditions of sale, it includes the generation of an ever larger mass of surplus working population. [...] This is written more simplified, more summarized, in my book *Capital: Historical Reason, Revolutionary Subject and Consciousness*, it is a chapter that is about the USSR, then I developed more comparisons.

[II]

[...] The last thing we had seen before cutting and announcing that we were going to continue in February (a little more time has passed), was the question of the Soviet Union, of the process of absolute centralization of capital as the property of the working class under the legal form of state ownership. And we didn't get to develop the discussion about that, I did the whole presentation, and then time ran out. So, I don't know if they want us to resume that discussion or if we move forward. [They say we should take it up again]

Well, you have the floor. You ask, because development was... Well, this as an expression of the powers of a national process of capital accumulation, *not* of the general movement of capital, on the basis of a mass of peasant population (now we will look later: of latent surplus population), and a mass of potential natural conditions, the full expression of the powers of that national process of capital accumulation could only be expressed through this absolute centralization. The immediate subject that expresses, directly personifies this process of centralization of capital, is the political organization of the working class, the Russian Communist Party. That since this absolute centralization of capital needs to take the form of the abolition *of a coup* of the capitalist class and the landlord class, it takes the form of a social revolution, that party has the character of a revolutionary party. Once capital is centralized, it is now necessary to manage that capital: it is transformed into a party of a bureaucratic character, to personify capital in its movement, it expresses all the potentialities that this absolute centralization of capital has.

We look at the ideological discourse both within the Soviet Union and outside, that the capitalist mode of production has been overcome, rather than being seen as the full expression within this national space of the process of centralization of capital. And we also saw how it corresponds to a historical period of production of a relatively undifferentiated worker on the basis of the development of large-scale industry, sustained by these two labor processes, of intervention of the subjectivity of the workers, which were the calibration of machinery and the manual assembly line. And how when the development of technical conditions through computing allows us to displace, to replace in these two processes that we had up to that point the presence of the subjectivity of the worker with the development of machinery, how it begins to collide with the need for differentiation that capital has with respect to the workers it is going to put into production; how the political form of the appearance of having overcome the capitalist mode of production clashes absolutely with this differentiation. How then does a process of technical delay occur, until it cannot be sustained.

And the other thing is how the centralization of capital goes beyond all national borders, and this is cut out as a limited national space, how it cannot take capital to produce outside its national scope and how this leads to the impossibility of reproducing that centralized capital, to the process of decentralization of capital. How it is the political party of the working class that manages this process of decentralization and how, on the basis of that decentralization, differentiation begins to develop, etc. If I remember correctly, that was largely the axis of development, but you should ask what you would like to discuss.

Ivan: Well, I, Juan, to break the ice, I wanted to ask you the following. That is, as if the limit of the USSR appears in the New International Division of Labor, that is, in this process, due to the fact that the USSR cannot expand its capital globally, that is, it has a limit given by the national space of accumulation itself. But at that stage, what happens is that there are companies, which are even state-owned, that do expand globally. I don't know, for example, here part of the privatized companies, such as electricity or telephone companies, are of European state capital. Why could the US not participate in that process in any case, with the influence and size that this socialist bloc also encompassed?

JIC: What one has in front of you is the unity of this process of capital accumulation. It is expressed through the appearance that the capitalist mode of production has been overcome, it is expressed through that ideological appearance. This ideological appearance implies that there is no other national sphere. It implies that everything taken from capital outside the national space to be applied in another territory, appears as the negation of what the Soviet Union itself is. It must be seen that the countries of Eastern Europe are not integrated into the Soviet Union: they remain independent democratic republics, and there is a relationship of strong asymmetry in the movement. The processes of strong centralization of capital that transcend national spaces are largely developed when the Soviet Union is already dissolved.

So, there is this clash that I exemplified with the proposal of this *Yankee* who says that the companies are ours because of the retirement and pension funds, we

have to prohibit our representatives from continuing to take jobs. But since it is the capitalist mode of production ideologically recognized as such, then this is part of the competition in the movement of capital. In the case of the Soviet Union, which is beginning to have a strong generation of surplus working population, multiplying the surplus working population, not applying all the potential for capital accumulation within the national space, clashes with the ideological unity of that movement, of that national process of capital accumulation, which is the appearance that competition no longer exists here. that here the capitalist mode of production has already been overcome. So, it needs a political form that does allow it to make internal differentiation, to generate, to openly recognize the presence of the mass of the surplus working population. Only then can it begin to release productions – and in fact does – outside its national space. So, it is incompatible with the political form. On the other sides, what one has is, in addition, that they are capitals of the national states that centralize, and many of them have ceased to be of their original national states, they have also ceased to belong, to be seen as a capital of social property within the national space and are seen as capitals independent of any national space of accumulation. In my understanding that is what is at the center.

There's an expression with that, which is... I don't remember if it is in 1952, in the ideological construction that prevailed in the Soviet Union, of: here there are two phases: the first phase is socialism and the second phase is communism, and in the communist phase what prevails is "To each according to his need", the Constitution of 1952 declares that the previous phase has already been completed and that now this phase has been entered. And then the shock, the incompatibility with political forms is absolute. I always take this: the multiplication of the surplus working population. If it had the powers of the phase of the relatively undifferentiated worker, it does not have the powers, and this is the political form of the plenitude of those powers for a national space like the Soviet Union. That I made the comparison with the United States, that its strong expansion also corresponds to that phase. But it never appears there... Precisely because of the differences of not having the surplus population already located within the national space, not having the history of the centralization of the organization of social life, politically it needs to take the form of, on the contrary, a multiplication of individual capitals and independent movements of individual capitals.

Neither can be fully sustained when the defamation phase comes, because the United States also enters into a strangulation of capital accumulation through this process of differentiation. I don't know if I answer with this, or I don't answer, or...

Ivan: I don't know, I have doubts. That is, as the "political" or "political-ideological" limit makes a bit of noise to me, due to the fact that I feel that this limit (and I feel it because I feel a little alien to knowledge, but, well, from what I have been able to read and research I come from Trotskyism, Juan, too, that, understand it) was already made manifest previously, that is, what the uprisings were in the 60s and early 70s and with the war in Afghanistan, that is, it seems to me that there is already a question of... or what you had said previously, such as this workers' state that goes out to directly repress its own working class, the Prague Spring, etc.,

violently, it is the Russian military apparatus that goes out to repress those countries of Europe and the East.

JIC: Wait, wait, will you forgive me for one thing? That is not their own working class, which is precisely not incorporated into the Soviet Union: it goes out to repress "deviations on the road to socialism" [Laughter], in those terms; does this. Now, in any case, what we were looking at is: these processes of differentiation and transformation of masses of latent surplus population into labor power for production processes based on the cheapness of labor power come from the 60s and 70s. They exploded with computers in the eighties, but they came from before. And in the Soviet Union, one of the things that [...][300] The growth of the surplus population is beginning to become evident. It's not what happened to them in the nineties: it has been generated, and it comes with previous manifestation and it will explode later.

And the other thing I wanted to point out to you is: it's not a workers' state, because the workers are an attribute of capital, and the state is the political representative of the total capital of society; so, it's a capitalist state. But it doesn't matter, that's nothing, it's a chicane, forget it. But I do make this clarification. I think it's important not to look at it... because many times when it is seen as a workers' state, then it seems the image of the betrayal of the Workers' state. And what the workers' state does is coerce the workers of the Soviet Union, it is the working class itself that is coercing itself, but under the juridical and political form of state coercion. It is not that Stalinism betrays that workers' state: Stalinism is the expression of how... the powers that this centralized capital has as the property of the working class, with all the brutality that is inherent in capital. And what it does is set in motion that process of capital accumulation... I had mentioned to them (I didn't notice it later and I don't remember who it is) the one who had announced that, I think it was by the beginning of the 90s, the Soviet Union was going to have a higher Gross Product *per capita* than that of the United States. Because the Soviet Union had been growing above 5% per year, and the United States at that time 2 or 3%, or something like that. And then... I always thought it was Sweezy, but then I didn't find him. And I was looking for it in Sweezy's little book, in a Sweezy article, and I didn't find it, but it might be. Well, one must never forget that it expresses all the powers that the working class has when it centralizes capital, even if here it is only as a national expression, and makes the leap from being, to use the term like this, the "most backward economy in Europe" to being the 2nd world economy in a very short time. and all the brutality that the capitalist mode of production still contains in the hands of the workers, on themselves. But I said, Ivan.

Iván: Also linked to the other question, which was what I wanted to finish is, what do you think of...? You saw that Hobsbawm has his proposal as to why the USSR falls, I don't know if it is the complete proposal, but at least a part, oneof the issues he expresses is the technological backwardness of the USSR. I think the metaphor he says is that he was very advanced in the industry of the nineteenth century, as if to say: well, he had a very large iron and coal industry but the change

[300] Inaudible.

in the technical base left him, I don't know, to call it in some way, "pedaling in the air" in the face of the development of computing and so on. In other words, what do you also think about this process? I don't remember if we had talked about it the other time or not.

JIC: This is what I was proposing. On what basis is the development of computing, to a large extent? The scientific development for the development of computing is done by the workers who still came from that relatively undifferentiated worker, but the application of computing requires a lot of manual labor. When all the development of computing, of communications, began, the platelets were made manually. Immediately, that production is not in the countries that did the development of computing: it is not in the United States, it is not in... France had a great development; At one time he still competed on an equal footing. The French company was [called? (23:52)] with IBM... All of this comes out immediately to East Asia. When it begins to develop, which is one of the steps of this before the platelets, the assembly of the computer boards with the transistors, all that goes, but straight ahead, first to Japan and then to Korea and Taiwan.

So, that's where it is done with the differentiation of the labor force, because it is infamous manual work. And the European labor force, that universal European worker, was very expensive from the point of view of capital to make that production. Since it was produced in relatively undifferentiated conditions, it is a labor force that capital, simplifying the assembly processes, among other things from valve devices to transistors, which is to make welding points, already puts the differentiation there. The proposal of the industry of the Soviet Union... So, I say, my first answer is: because in order to make that development I had to make the differentiation, and I couldn't make the differentiation. So, as much as its labor power... Moreover, it is a historical moment in which indifferentiation is taking the character of an increase in the amount of use-values consumed by the working population. I suppose that, just as it came from the stage of the universal worker to produce workers with more productive attributes, the need to increase the consumption of use values appears. And there is a sharp increase in what would be the real wage in the Soviet Union, in the seventies, perhaps in the beginning, in the first half of the eighties, there is this need to increase worker consumption, which implies the need to produce a certain type of worker, but which appears as a general need.

So, for me, what mediates, above all, in backwardness, is this: they continue to use the tools, the machinery that corresponded to the old universal worker, and with that you can no longer compete. Now: this phenomenon was happening in the Soviet Union. I had the opportunity to talk about it with Horacio Ciafardini. Horacio was from the RCP[301], so he didn't have much sympathy with the Soviet Union, but he studied planning in Poland, with Oskar Lange, and had had the opportunity to visit the Soviet Union. And his proposal was (this was said at the end of the 70s, at the beginning of the 80s) that yes: the Soviet Union had a very developed space industry, a very developed war industry, a very developed atomic industry, but

[301] Revolutionary Communist Party.

that one scraped the box of matches and the matches broke. That was the popular image of the poor quality of use values for general consumption.

I do not know to what extent this was strictly so, and to what extent it was a critical view on the part of Ciafardini. Well, for them the Soviet Union was social imperialism, it was the two imperialisms: North American imperialism and social imperialism, which was the Soviet Union. So, he appeared biased with this. You would have to look exactly... Indeed, the automotive industry[302]... But we must also look at the fact that production was not oriented to the production of cars for general consumption, it was oriented to the production of trucks and collective transport. So, when it appears that they are going to increase the consumption of use values, that is when FIAT makes an agreement with the Russian state factory that made the cars and they begin to manufacture FIAT models in the Soviet Union. And there begins to be an incorporation of... [...] If I remember correctly it was the Fiat 128, the Fiat 125, one of those had been incorporated there. But this development is also late.

I understand that there are statements that say that the industry was quite backward, that it continued to operate on the basis of reverse engineering, of copying what was produced in Western Europe, in the United States. I don't know, I always regretted not having been able to take advantage of the situation of an Argentinian (sorry, it's a digression, but...) who had graduated in Argentina, I think as a public accountant (because it was a time when there was not... he had just begun his degrees in economics), a militant of the Communist Party and had gone to do his postgraduate studies in the Soviet Union and had worked all his life in the planning agency, and with the dissolution of the Soviet Union he returned to Argentina. But he's a guy who knew about planning, I guess a lot. And the problem I had is, I guess I was very distressed by what it had been like to live from the glory of the Soviet Union to the dissolution... And then it was impossible to exchange three words and not intersperse a joke. And then it was very difficult for him to tell what was happening. He told me a few things, about the planning not being... That the managers of the different companies made all kinds of tricks, that there were competitions below the formality regarding who supplied whom and so on, but I could not ask him much more than that kind of thing.

But I suppose there must be texts of this. Now this Italian, what's his name, Franco...? [...][303] This is for Fernando Dachevsky. They were looking at the technical development of the Soviet Union, because Franco had that image of technical backwardness and a lot of copying. But well, for me you have to look at it throughout the development, if at some point they were more or less equal and from a certain point it was delayed.

Iván: I don't want to monopolize the word, in case any other colleague wants to speak, but I have a lot of questions. I wanted to ask one more, a comment and a question, or two comments and a question. The first is an anecdote told by my uncle, who was a member of the Communist Party and had and still has sympathy for the USSR. I think that in the 80s they copied the cassette music player model,

[302] He appears to be answering the chat, but his transcript is not available for this session.
[303] The recording is half cut off.

and what my uncle used to say is that one factory is in charge of making the cassettes and another is in charge of making the cassette players. But the thing is that they did not agree and the cassettes were larger than the player, so they had a stack of cassettes and a stack of players that could not be combined with each other because of the size of the cassette. And to this story also came the fact that, I remember that I attended a seminar with José Castillo (from a Trotskyist party here in Argentina, for those who do not know), and I remember that he commented on something that you also alluded to recently, that he said that there was a problem with consumers in the Soviet Union because of the repression. In other words, it was very difficult as a consumer to complain about what you received. So they said that the military industries, which were some of the ones you had mentioned, the consumers who were military had a lot of power to claim whether or not what the factories produced met the necessary conditions. So, like those industries in general were well supplied, but the rest of the consumer industries... There were many problems in relation to what was produced.

And then – and this was the question I wanted to ask – that is how the repression of that capitalist state managed by the working class acts on the productive processes. Because, for example, I remember that there was a lot, and I think this is also in that seminar, of the repression of managers. That is, if managers planned poorly or there were problems in stocks, sometimes so as not to have shortages, they produced more. But, well, there were a whole series of problems with planning, and many times that triggered the manager's own freedom, that is, he could end up in jail or with some kind of summary judgment. How does repression act in this sense in this form of organization, and if it is not also a limit in itself? I don't know if the question is well expressed, but well, maybe something was understood.

JIC: We should look at this: we have to think that it is a type of worker, the manager, who is not the manager of today, who is another structure. So, I would say this: I have been out of the way for a long time to see what exactly happens in management, but they were structures, in the industry in general, more or less hierarchical, in the sense that there is a line of organization and people adjust to the line. Now I don't know if that continues to work like this because of the type of differentiation process, but there were structures of accountability, in general. Now I wouldn't know how to tell you, we'd have to see. I suppose there will be concrete studies on that too, on what effect it may have had. Because the other form of coercion was what later came to be called the "moral stimulus", because of what I said the other time, of Stakhanovism, of being a hero of the Soviet Union. That it must have worked in one historical period, and I suppose that in another historical period it must have been diluted and, since it was from the Soviet Union, pay me more and don't pat me on the back so much. But I can't say more than that...

Also that rigidity in the hierarchical structure, when the development of computing comes, when the whole process comes that we have to advance in technical transformations, it is possible that this structure precisely begins to collide with the possibility of generating workers who see themselves as free, creative individuals, and who then, It's one of the things... I think we saw it at some point in the workshop, but not too much: the way of coercing a worker who, in

order to do his work, which is creative work, has to see himself as a free individual by nature, and that individual cannot be coerced by saying: if you do this wrong, I will send you to prison. He is coerced by playing games to play, making him have an all-terrain vehicle even if he never leaves the asphalt, because that gives him the image of being a free individual. So, there can also be one of the faces of not being able to maintain the transformation in material conditions. On the one hand, for the very simplified work, but on the other hand, for the work that needed to be more complex.

As for the unity of planning, I had the opportunity to see (this was in the eighties), for a matter of work, the reports on... In the United States they have a thing called... the "I don't know how much" Credit Corporation, which handles stimulus and production regulation credits. And I made a yearbook with the analysis of what had happened in all markets, in particular in the commodity markets, it was linked to the forward markets. And once I read a report from the planning body, the Gosplan of the Soviet Union. And the report of what had happened in the year seemed to be a carbon copy of the US report. Because the U.S. report was: steel production grew by 5% this year because this happened, that happened, the other thing happened. The Soviet Union's was: a growth in steel production of 2% had been planned, but it grew by 5% because this happened, that happened, the other thing happened. And one said: they have so little control over the unity of social production and consumption, just as it appears in the United States: that is a unity that is established indirectly and that deviates from normality in form, but it gave the impression of not being a planning that was – in very rough terms – well fitted. In what you say, it appears in the specific case that it was not well fitted, and in the global movement it did not seem very well fitted either, that there were circumstances that said that production would grow or decrease and not... And the plan was almost symbolic, to a large extent. When one saw those deviations, I said: well, double the rate that was expected to grow or decrease... I didn't really have much control over what happened.

Now: I'm betting that there are going to be lots of studies like this, punctual, of industries... The problem is that they are very ideologically biased, that a little bit like this Franco, who is an Italian who is in England working on the former Asian Soviet republics, what happened to the industry. Because they were production areas... some were agricultural, others were industrially produced. Fernando, did you want to raise something?

Fernando: Juan, how are you? No, going to what you were just saying on the subject of unity and planning, it is quite surprising... I don't know how much of what I'm going to say operated in general in all branches of production, but at least in the war industry, and in particular in the war aeronautical industry, there were different companies that presented projects to the state and competed through those projects as if they were tenders to produce. a plane in question that was being sought. The question would be... I don't know first what level of generality this had, but how does this competence operate ideologically in what is central planning?

JIC: The question is, were they different companies, but were they all state-owned?

Fernando: Yes, of course. You had Mikoyan, [...][304], you had Sukhoi, Beriev... They are all different productive units, let's put it like this, with their planning managed internally, which had to present a project and competed for that project, to be approved by the state.

JIC: Forgive me, because... They are organs of the state that submit the proposal to the organ of the unity of the planning of the production of the state.

Fernando: I understand that it is.

JIC: When he joined FIAT, I don't know how FIAT was handled, but this is... In part this is not being able to absolutely centralize planning, which with the means that existed at the time... One also has to look at that: today it would be much easier to centralize planning. At that time, the instruments available for planning were much more primitive and limited. Now: in any case, the organ, the Gosplan, is the one that later says whether this one is going to do it or that one is going to do it.

Now, the other thing that appears is, in the ideological forms, that I did not stop last time; I think we talked about it very early on, when we were talking about the proposals about the value of commodities, [...] we talked about why Rubin's proposals could not prosper regarding: it is the fetishistic consciousness that explains the existence of value and commodities, because then there were commodities and there was value in the Soviet Union, and it is assumed that consciousness had disappeared. Then this answer appeared: there are mercantile societies in which in some the work is private and in the other they are also mercantile, but the labor is social. And so in socialism there is value and commodities, only they are instruments of planning. That approach that appears in the manual (I think it's from 1952, the manual, somewhere), is quickly going to be displaced by neoclassical economics, and the problem that for planning... Precisely what is missing is to recognize that they do not dare to say that it is capital, but they say: the means of production are a factor of production that must be remunerated according to their marginal productivity. Labor is a factor of production that must be remunerated according to marginal productivity, and land is a factor of production that must be remunerated according to its marginal productivity. And it is possible that with this ideological construction it has appeared very strongly: here we have to decentralize production. And where is the optimum achieved? When each of these factors is remunerated according to its marginal productivity.

So, the organs of the state that produce the same kind of things have to compete with each other in order to maximize the productivity of—they don't say "capital"—of the means of production. So, I suppose that these constructions must have appeared strongly there, this change in ideological form. We would have to

[304] It seems to name another Soviet company that I haven't been able to find.

look at it, if at the time... when that structure of competition develops, which may have always been present, or if it has appeared at a certain point in the movement...

Fernando: No, I understand that at least in what is the aeronautical war industry he was always there. I think so. At least, one has different planes from different ... productive units, of different companies — I don't know what to call them — since the beginning of the military aeronautical industry in the Soviet Union. I don't know if it's...

JIC: But be careful, that may not mean that they compete: it may be that they are assigned: well, you are going to produce this, you are going to produce this type of aircraft....

Fernando: But there were different productive communities, but it may be that they did not compete, it's true.

JIC: But it was full of different production units. The degree of centralization of planning is not absolute, but they are all state enterprises, which have been assigned... I say: in the production of bread there must have been lots of independent organs, of independent companies for the production of bread, of clothing... But that does not mean that they competed with each other, but that they were assigned quotas of social production. Then we have to see how the general unity was established. It may be that there were, I say... One of the issues they have is, in agricultural production, despite centralization and everything, then there are independent management between the different productive units on land that allow them to sustain different productivity, they have very different situations, and there also appears the discourse of: it must be remunerated according to its marginal productivity. So, the units that are on better land have to receive rent. And the argument is: differential rent is surplus value produced by the workers of each productive unit. But hey, you have to see it. My knowledge of the Soviet Union ends in this. I don't know the details of how the unit worked and so on. I don't know if they want to propose anything else.

Ivan: I, John, another thing I had in mind, but it wasn't... [...] In relation to working conditions, I wanted to ask about income. What you were saying about... Stakhanov, I understand that this was very short-lived. I studied a little bit of the Chinese Revolution and the Chinese, especially Maoism, criticized the Soviet Union for material incentives instead of moral incentives. The Chinese were much cooler and gave encouragement to their workers instead of salary conditions. But, in relation to this, I did read an ethnography that makes a comparative work between the work of a worker in the United States and the work of a worker... not in Russia, but within the Soviet Union, in one of these Eastern European countries, but I can't remember which one right now, [Faraway?[305]] comparative ethnography.

And what he argues, and it was very shocking to read, was that while an American worker was working on a particular machine, it was very common for workers in the socialist bloc to use two machines at the same time. In ethnography

[305] He names an author, but I can't understand the audio or find it online.

he makes the description, he said that it was something extremely dangerous, that is, that the risk and health of the worker was in question all the time. But since the payment was piecework, that is, the way to obtain more income was by increasing productivity, these levels of exploitation were very normal. And yet, it did not seem as if the worker with this greater intensity of body expenditure and that higher level of labor intensity would be compensated with a salary equivalent to that of an American worker or similar. These things are appearing: on the one hand it would seem that industry acts with a lower productivity, but it would also seem that there is a certain compensation of the labor force, of the working class in that industry.

JIC: That's where I lost you, how was it a compensation?

Ivan: No, in the sense that the working class is more exploited than the American working class, that is, as if there was a mechanism of absolute surplus value running stronger in the socialist bloc than in the United States.

JIC: Yes. These are the powers that the centralization of capital as the property of the working class has, with all the brutality typical of the capitalist mode of production. Real wages were... With these caveats: you have to see in which era you are looking especially. But it is clear that real wages were lower in the Soviet Union than in the United States. Also, in principle, that they were much more universal. Because what appears from the hierarchs... The hierarchs had the dacha, the weekend house, but they had that. It wasn't that they had an abyss of difference. So, it seems that it was quite... And that possibly the managers of the Soviet Union had a much lower level of income than the American managers. Now: it is on this superexploitation of the working population that the speed with which the accumulation of capital expands in the Soviet Union is sustained. Sustained by all these conditions.

Very belatedly, what I was saying before appears... For example, beef consumption was very low in relative terms, even food consumption in general. Wages are rising, and wheat consumption is rising. I know it from the Argentine case: Argentina is beginning to export to the Soviet Union because wages are rising; And when one says: you are exporting more wheat, because wages are rising, wages must be very low from the outset for a wage increase to be reflected in an increase in bread consumption. Now: it's all those concrete conditions.

Also with this differentiation: first you have to see what happened to black workers in the United States, at what time, with non-unionized workers in the United States, with new immigrants... It is true that very strong illegal immigration is part of the new phase, but... I missed what I wanted to propose. With all these caveats, the United States as a country of immigration, which it continues to be, which is supplied with labor through immigration, needs to offer conditions to that labor force to attract it, which are different from those that the population already has within the national sphere, which does not have an additional source of labor force and which comes with a history of strongly disciplined work and personal subordination.

And this (I didn't raise it either, I often do, but I didn't raise it in this workshop) is going to have these reflections, which is not the case with the Soviet Union, but it may have to do precisely with the limitations when the need to accelerate technical change comes with the development of computing and so on. This is a study done for the U.S. Congress 20 years ago, a little more. It is a study that they do on differences in what is the productive subjectivity of... It's made about Japan, about the Japanese workers (you have to think that twenty, twenty-five years ago, China is just emerging explosively, still what appears to be the axis of technical development in East Asia is in Japan), and one of the things that appears is that the United States has proportionally more basic science than Japan, and Japan has a lot of applied science.

And one of the issues mentioned in the report is the problem of... I'm going to put it like this: the Japanese mentality (to put it in these terms). The Japanese come from a culture of strong discipline, of strong submission to authority, and so they have the problem that in order to do creative work you have to see yourself as a free individual. That it may be that never in life will I have a result that is not simply: well, not like this, not like this, not like this, not like that... but I don't know how. Because all these went wrong, but well, this is what I contribute. He is an individual who has to be accountable by saying: I achieved this. And that individual serves us for the development of basic science. And there may have been another aspect of the clash with what you were saying about the structure. of repression and so on in the face of the need for technical change.

Regarding the Japanese or the Koreans, Nicolás Grinberg had an experience of seeing them operating in English universities, where they had to go to "destructure" themselves. And so they were the fully structured expression of the unstructured individual [Laughter]: they complied with all the rules, they could not deviate from the rule they had to follow. Now: that is reflected later in what kind of labor force can operate. I don't know if in Japan, twenty years later, this still works, but I suppose that to a large extent it still works. And the question is in China, because they come from the same thing of strong discipline with irrigated crops, with relatively recent histories of peasants, and the question is whether they can deal with aspects that require a conscience that sees itself as free, creative, undisciplined: I shit on how I have to be dressed, I am a fully free individual. Well, this also appears in that historical process.

Fernando: I listened to you and I kept thinking that one of the issues to take into account is also in terms of the comparison between the reproduction of different labor forces from different national spheres. And I don't know what it was like in the Soviet Union, I have doubts now and I would be interested in being able to find out, it is what part of the reproduction of the labor force is contributed to the salary and what part, its access comes through the condition of citizens of the national state in a direct way. I don't know if in the Soviet Union everything was centralized, planned production, and through public agencies, but that doesn't mean that part of it can't be paid in the salary, and another part comes directly through the use of health, education or whatever, without there having to be a monetary counterpart. And in that sense I have no doubt that the average

reproduction of the American labor force was higher than that of the Soviet one, but that caveat should also be made.

And thinking in that sense, and relating it to what you said at the beginning that it is a national sphere of capital accumulation, which found itself with a huge mass of surplus population already within its territory, unlike the North American, what one has is a diversity of surplus population that was found in Soviet territory, in which he had to operate in a way... I don't know what Franco saw about this in the case of Uzbekistan, but at least what I know, which is the Armenian case in the area of Central Asia or the Middle East, what one has is the image that the Soviet period is the construction of large hospitals, of large schools, of great recreation centers and of large clubs, that there was nothing, absolutely nothing around the population that was previously occupying that territory.

JIC: Yes. In the first place, in fact, all these things were accessed in the condition of citizen, and they have such weight that... There was always the problem of how to compare the gross domestic product, and... What was it called in the Soviet Union? They don't call it "GDP", it seems to me that it was the "material product" or... But the problem was this, which appeared, for example: housing. Housing is recorded in the Soviet Union at the cost of construction, and in the United States it is recorded at the sale price of construction. Transport was free (I don't know if everything), education, housing... In any case, what appeared was: the level of consumption, even if all these things were available, was lower than in the case of the United States. I mean: in the United States, in unionized factory workers. Again, with the differences within that much more marked than in European countries, because the United States has its life organized on the basis of racism, to a large extent. A country that has its population statistics categorized by race is an example of what racism means.

So, with all these caveats, what appeared was: there was an abyss of difference in the conditions of expenditure that could be seen as "luxury" of one type of worker and the other, of the European worker, of France, of northern Italy – not of southern Italy – of the English industrial or mining worker, of the United States, with respect to that of the Soviet Union. That the house was... yes[306], but it was much more... let's call it "precarious". I understand that education was universal and of a good level. And well, and many of these questions that you raised, Fernando, recently... Recently, in some Argentine newscast, they interviewed someone who had lived in the Soviet Union, who was now living here, with the intention of showing the misfortunes of the Soviet Union and he said: "I had a house, I had the club, I had the holidays, they asked me 'Where do you want to go on holiday this year?' …". They didn't know how to cut things off so that he would start to raise misfortunes and not the benefits he had had [Laughs].

We would have to look at that. Now, I return to this previous example: when it appears that there is going to be a salary increase, so now we have to supply more wheat... Consumption levels should not be too high, in the sense of "basic" needs satisfied, but... No more than that. And there appears the need for the most creative

[306] I imagine that he means that it was free.

worker who can stumble upon this condition. [...] And excuse me, I add another thing that you say about forms of consciousness and... At one point also at the beginning of the eighties, the end of the seventies, the export of Argentine wine to the Soviet Union was also proposed, at a time when Argentine wine was not like today's, but was what was called "common" wine, table, in bulk, to reduce the consumption of white drinks[307] in the Soviet Union. And where there is a strong consumption of white beverages is because there are problems regarding how the individual looks at himself, and why he needs, beyond the cold, the strong consumption of alcohol. I don't know if they want to propose anything else.

We put this aside and move on, we resume the development that Marx is advancing. We had arrived, with this centralization, at how centralization feeds concentration, how concentration feeds centralization, and how we had already left behind a process in which there was no change in the technical composition of capital, therefore there was no movement in the organic composition of capital, and we had entered to see what happens then with the relative growth of variable capital with respect to constant capital. And here Marx is always going to pose it with this additional question.

That growth... He is going to say: this is relative; In absolute terms, the quantity, the magnitude of variable capital may be increasing. But at the same time, when he looks at this, what he is proposing is: here the incorporation of machinery displaces workers who do not find a buyer for their labor power (in this we had before): not only does the magnitude of variable capital decrease relatively, but it appears, relatively — because later it puts it back as if there can be no more at all. fewer workers. And this is something that here is going to look like this, that when we get to volume 3 we are going to see what role it plays in the analysis: that there is a small amount of total living work. But well, having made this observation, we were finishing, and I think we had already finished, with section 2 of the eastern chapter of the general law of capitalist accumulation. And the last thing that appears, what closes that point, is this proportional decrease of variable capital with respect to total capital, and how total capital grows more and more rapidly with respect to the growth of variable capital.

3. Progressive production of a relative overpopulation or industrial reserve army

With this we would enter point 3 [...]. So, what is going to appear is: total capital grows, variable capital grows, therefore the mass of labor power grows — which we should remember that the reference makes: the mass of labor power is not synonymous with the number of workers employed, because that depends on the duration of the working day. The mass of labor power that is put to work grows, but he says: it grows in a constantly decreasing proportion. And so, what is implied in what follows... Because... [...] What it is going to ask is what happens to the

[307] Alcoholic, apparently high proof (e.g., vodka), but I'm not sure.

number of workers that are going to be absorbed, considering here given the length of the working day, how that mass of labor power is distributed among individuals. But what he is going to put is, he says:

> Now, in order to absorb a certain additional number of workers and even to retain in their posts, given the constant metamorphosis of primitive capital, those who are already working, an *ever more accelerated accumulation of total capital is required*.[308]

What he is going to add to this is: the development of accumulation and centralization (this that closed the previous part) multiplies the powers of capital, through the change in the technical composition and, therefore, in the organic composition of capital, and that pushes down variable capital – and he is going to say – "[...] to make the constant increase."[309] And here it no longer appears as a relative movement, but as a decrease in variable capital so that it can increase... Something that was variable capital that becomes constant capital. So, there is a decrease in the mass of labor force that goes... there appears as if it were absolute, the diminution of the demand for labor power by capital. Well, and here I make this clarification.

Many years ago I started to do a series of exercises that I have developed here on proportions between the rate of surplus value, organic composition... I don't remember how many other things. And to consider a question, which in principle is not made explicit by Marx. For what is in place is this: that a given additional number of workers may always be absorbed, or even that the demand for the number of workers that were initially there may be maintained. And what I did play in the analysis is: but there is a growth in the working population. And so the question is not simply the absorption of a certain *always equal* amount of labor power, but that the quantity of labor power grows. For if it is a given quantity of labour-power, then the variable capital is always the same. And here variable capital also has to grow simply because the amount of the working population grows. So, I made a series of combinations for relative speeds of motion of one thing and the other that today I take for ... Made "to the core", so I'm going to skip it in my development. Because he was looking for the point at which there is no growth of capital that can sustain the demand for labor power, no matter how low the "vegetative" growth of the working population may be.

And instead, what I would like to present to you is a synthesis. of the proposal that Marx puts into this. He says: there is a relative decline of variable capital which accelerates as the total capital grows, and which is presented as inverted as if it were an absolute, constant growth of the working population, faster than the growth of variable capital. Or the growth of constant capital, that is, of the possibility of having the means of production to occupy that working population. And so, that is where Marx, having stated this, is going to synthesize by saying that population growth is not an absolute growth of population that generates the multiplication of the surplus rural population, but it is the relative growth of variable capital with respect to the movement of total capital. And that

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[308] Marx, K. (1977: 533), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[309] Ibid.

consequently, the working population is left over by capital because of the way in which variable capital grows with respect to total capital.

I don't know if any of them use FCE's edition. None? Well, then, José Luis, I make the clarification. The translation of fondo de cultura, at least the old one, says:

> [...] But this growth is not constant, but *relative: capitalist accumulation constantly produces, in proportion to its intensity and extent, a working population excessive for the average needs of the exploitation of capital* [...].[310]

That phrase "this growth is not constant, but *relative*", is nonsense. The correctness of this is: capitalist accumulation constantly produces, rather, an excessive working population to... etc. So he got his words wrong. It is: capitalist accumulation produces constantly... [...] I think that's how I took it from the one in Siglo XXI.

Edgardo: If you want, I'll read it.

JIC: Yes, yes, read it.

Edgardo:

> [...] *Capitalist accumulation* produces constantly, on the contrary, and precisely in proportion to its energy and volume, a *relatively surplus working population*, i.e., *excessive* for the *average needs of capital valorization* and therefore *superfluous*.[311]

JIC: Exactly. Well, that's why, "this growth is not constant, but relative", is a phrase... Nothing, he was wrong when he translated Roces. That in Volume 1 there are not too many of these, then in Volume 3 there are to... pull up. Is that clear?

Well, I'll take how Marx synthesizes this, and then I'm going to propose (I suppose not today, but...) to see a diagram with this question. So what is becoming clear is how the product of the workers' own labour confronts them in the form of capital as a power that is alien to them, and not simply as something that belongs to the capitalist and has to develop the production process under the command of the capitalist. but how capital becomes the immediate subject of the process of social life and invests the necessity of the production of use values for human life into necessity... what governs movement, production, is the productive consumption of labor power for capital. And then, alienation is shown in its fullness: not simply as we have been looking at it until now, but in the fact that the workers produce, in the form of production of capital, the means to find themselves by negating themselves as subjects of production, as producers. I don't know if what I proposed was understood.

The alienation that one had been seeing until now was to reproduce itself as an attribute of capital. But it seemed to be reproduced as an attribute of capital as capital's need for labor power to be consumed productively. And now what

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[310] Ibid.
[311] Marx, K. (1988: 784), *Capital*, Book One, Vol. III. Mexico City: Siglo XXI.

appears is that what the workers produce, the material product of the workers' labor, has a social form that turns the workers themselves into surplus for the production process. So, what is going to appear is: the capitalist mode of production makes the workers produce the means to surplus with respect to those means. And this, he says, is a peculiar law of population, only proper to the capitalist mode of production, a way of organizing the process of social life where direct producers generate the conditions to deny themselves as direct producers, to become surpluses for social production, and consequently for social consumption.

And now what is going to appear is: that population that appeared simply as something that capital had left over, becomes a source for valorization, to enhance the movement of capital. And what he is going to propose is the industrial reserve army, which is available to capital according to how it needs it, and where it appears again how the worker, the working class, even outside the direct process of production, belongs to capital, is an attribute of capital. And it says verbatim:

> It constitutes an *industrial reserve army*, an *available* contingent, which belongs to capital as absolutely as if it were raised and maintained at its expense. It provides it with human material, always ready to be exploited as its variable needs for exploitation demand it, and independent, moreover, of the limits that the real increase in population may oppose.[312]

And so, here we have to what extent the working class is an attribute of capital, even when capital takes away from it the possibility of selling its labor power. And here what is going to appear then is a cyclical movement in the accumulation of capital. But I propose to do two things. First, leave the cyclical movement, for the next one, start with that. Or, rather... Before the cyclical movement, look synthetically, with a series of graphs and analyzing the variables that formally enter into the generation of the surplus working population, how this is an absolute necessity of capital. That it is not a possibility in the general movement of capital, but that this is a simple necessity of capital: to multiply that surplus working population. So, I propose that we look at that, and then let's look at the cyclical forms, and then let's go on to look at the different concrete forms that this relative overpopulation has. Do you want to propose something with what we have seen so far? Yes, Javiera.

Javiera: I have a question. The idea of "relative", I have doubts about that. On the one hand, I think: is it relative because of the changing relationship in which the working class is divided between the active army and the reserve army, or is it relative because of the increase and reduction of the relative volume of overpopulation?

JIC: No, it's relative because... The contrast is made between relative or absolute. It is not a problem of the absolute growth of the working population: it is a problem of the growth of the need that capital has for labor power in relation to the population... even with a given working population (I am going to try to modify my graphs to be able to cover all this). It is capital that says it has too much, it is

[312] Marx, K. (1977: 535), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

not the movement of the working population that makes it surplus, but it is surplus in relation to the need for capital. And here another aspect appears.

Who is the subject of this process? This is the process of human life, and therefore, the subject is human beings, it is the process of human life. Now what appears is that the concrete subject is capital, and that for capital, relatively, it has an excess of human life. And so it is not a problem of human life surplus for the sake of it, because the population grows a lot: it is because capital says that there is too much human life. The one that sets the conditions is capital, and then what appears is this. Is that clear? I don't know if there's anything else...

That is why this observation comes that he has invested... It seems that it was a problem that the population grew too much in absolute terms. And that besides, the whole discussion that there was with Smith, Malthus, regarding what happens to the working population, was an absolute growth... In Smith there is a relative growth of capital, because capital begins to grow more slowly, but at the same time there is an accelerated growth of the population. In Malthus it was purely and exclusively: it is a problem of the workers who grow in absolute terms in such a way that there is no capital to suffice. And what Marx is proposing is: capital is what makes it so that for *its* needs there is a surplus of the working population, regardless of how the working population moves.

Javiera: Yes. I understood that, that it was for the needs of capital. In fact, it is just the phrase you clarified from Fondo de Cultura. But... as it is a relationship, and there are several aspects that point 3 touches on, between the increase that is decreasing... Like in those multiple relationships that he puts in that section I got confused.

JIC: What happens is that, when it starts with the cyclical, the industrial reserve army appears as satisfying a need of the cyclical movement of capital. And then the concrete forms will appear, there is no proposal of... After that, it is not clear what happens... If there is a reference, to what capital does when it has too much to spare, there is a very general reference: how capital regulates when it has too much to spare. Just as it regulates what it has to spare, and if it has too little to spare, it is the very movement of capital that causes the industrial reserve army to grow rapidly. What happens later in the text is that he is mentioned when he has too much to spare, but he is not too much... It appears as part of what can happen, not as a necessarily growing movement, beyond any cyclical movement. And the development that we have been accompanying, in Marx's words, what it entails is: beyond any cyclical movement, if there is a growth in the number of permanent workers, sooner or later there will be a surplus of workers that there is no longer any way for capital to take them back.

So, first there is a development that leads to a surplus that is not cyclical, which is a trend surplus. And then, it is then seen as a movement of a cyclical nature. But the first development is: this inevitably leads to an ever greater multiplication of that surplus working population. And then jump into the... Well, it's the industrial reserve army. But one can say: there comes a point when it is no longer useful to capital, if that working population is left over to such an extent that it is not even...

Let's see what source of empowerment of accumulation generates it, beyond fluidity; But there comes a point when it does not find a buyer for its labor power generation after generation, it no longer has labor power, and then capital no longer even serves as an industrial reserve army, because it does not serve it as labor power.
That's where one has to see that there is a trend movement here. And if capital wants to reverse this trend, the way to reverse it is absolutely brutal: it is to annihilate the working population that it has left over. But hey, we'll leave this for next time. [...].

[II]

Well, the last thing we had seen was this generation of a surplus working population. Up to this point we have seen it as a general movement, a tendency in the movement of accumulation based on the production of relative surplus value, and the reflection it has, how this takes shape through the increase in the organic composition of capital. So, first, if there is any question of what we saw last time that you want to raise before starting; if not, with this graph that I had mentioned, which schematically reflect this movement. I don't know if there's anything...

So, let's look at a synthesis of these determinations that Marx has been deploying and how he arrives at that point where what is in front of us is a specific historical law of the population in the capitalist mode of production. This is: being the process of production of human life, the generation of a population that is superfluous from the point of view of how the production of life is organized in the capitalist mode of production in this society. If we start by looking at the human life process, and how each cycle of the human life process is organized on the basis of how each member of society is assigned what useful, concrete labor he is going to do for others and what use values he is going to consume as a result of the work of others to reproduce himself as an individual organ of the social life process, Here we find a society where the concrete, immediate subject that sets in motion social production, is this objectified social relation, is capital, and how, then, this way of organizing human life develops as the negation of the very reproduction of human life. So, the need for the generation of this surplus population, one can express it schematically with what I am going to put now [...].

This is how capital engenders this relative worker overpopulation. And then to synthesize the whole development. What I have here is the factors that appear playing, in a direct way... They are the synthesis of the determinations of the capitalist mode of production, but expressed simply as if they were the factors that play a role in the generation of this surplus working population.

Determinantes formales del crecimiento absoluto y relativo de la demanda de fuerza de trabajo con la acumulación de capital

Tasa de plusvalía: $p' = \frac{p}{v}$

Tasa de ganancia: $g' = \frac{p}{v+c}$

Composición orgánica: $co = \frac{c}{v}$

So, to look at it, the first thing one has to take into consideration is how the absolute and relative growth of the demand for labor power evolves as capital accumulation develops. And these three factors are: the rate of surplus value (we know surplus value in relation to variable capital), because the capacity of capital to accumulate depends on the rate of surplus value. The second factor is the rate of profit, because it is this that synthesizes the capacity of capital to valorize itself, not simply with the part of capital that is capable of producing surplus value but with the total mass of capital. When we were watching the last chapter of the section on absolute surplus value, this *formal expression* of the capacity of capital to valorize itself appeared. The expression, so to speak, "real," is the rate of surplus-value, because the only part of capital which has this capacity is variable capital. But formally, the possibility of accumulation, the proportion in which capital can be accumulated, is given by the rate of profit (it is the ratio between surplus value and total capital, the most constant variable) discounting the part that goes to the individual consumption of the capitalists. For the whole scheme that I am going to take, I leave aside that part and consider it as if the entire surplus value were the one that is destined to accumulation. And the third element that plays a role in determining what will happen to the demand for labour power as accumulation develops is the organic composition: what weight constant capital has with respect to variable capital.

What Marx says is: this surplus working population would be generated even if the working population always grew by a fixed quantity — that is, an increasingly smaller proportion — even at an increasingly small rate of growth, or even if the number of workers, the working population, remained constant. What Marx is trying to emphasize in this approach is: this is not a problem of absolute growth of the working population, but it is a problem of the relative growth of the working population in the face of the growth of variable capital, that is, the need for capital for labor power.

The problem with this, which I was telling you before starting the recording, is that if one is going to assume a working population that is given, if one starts from the basis that this working population is employed, the problem is that capital would only have these workers to feed itself. And if the number of labourers decreases, consequently, because that quantity is given and begins to decrease, as the organic composition of capital increases and the surplus-value generated has to be applied to a larger proportion of constant capital in relation to variable capital, the problem that arises is that if variable capital decreases, the mass of

surplus value decreases and the rate of profit decreases. And then, how is this accumulation going to be sustained? And the same thing, if a fixed magnitude is put down: it implies a decreasing rate, which decreases the growth of the working population in the face of the growth of capital. And then, there is also this problem that it would be necessary to explain why this working population grows proportionally less and less, and where the source comes from, the possibility of producing additional surplus value in proportion, or in relation to what capital is increasing.

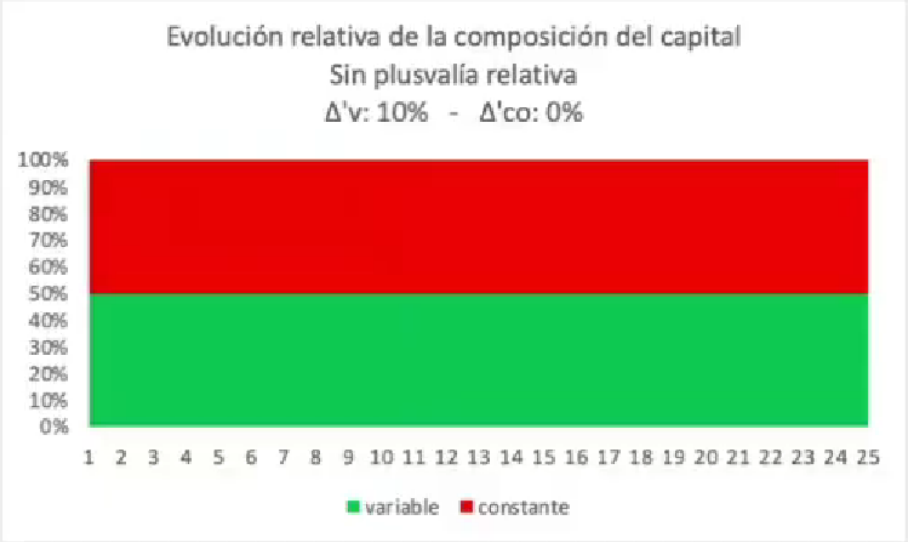
So, what I do is first look at what happens with these factors, regardless of what happens with the working population, assuming that there is a working population available for capital, and that consequently, the first thing that is here is that the working population is given as having a given growth rate, it grows in proportion to the magnitude it is having. But the first thing we are going to analyze... We leave the first step that we are going to take: it leaves aside the proportion in which the working population is growing, and we are going to look at it first from the point of view of what happens with variable capital, constant capital, with the organic composition of capital, and then we are going to look at it with respect to, then, what is the condition for the working population to find a buyer for labor power. Well, I don't know if this was clear, but I'm going to start with it.

We have already seen in [Marx's] development that first he looks at accumulation without change in the technical composition of capital, and then he looks at accumulation with the growth of organic composition as a reflection that what governs the movement of social production is the multiplication of the capacity of variable capital to valorize itself: the multiplication of the rate of surplus value, the production of relative surplus value. So, in the first step we're going to take, we're not going to look at it. we are going to do the same as Marx, looking at what would happen to the demand for labor power if there were no production of relative surplus value. The conditions for the population... Sorry, again: they are the formal determinants of the evolution of the demand for labor power as the accumulation of capital develops without relative surplus value, they are synthesized in this table:

Determinantes formales del crecimiento absoluto y relativo de la demenda de fuerza de trabajo con la acumulación de capital

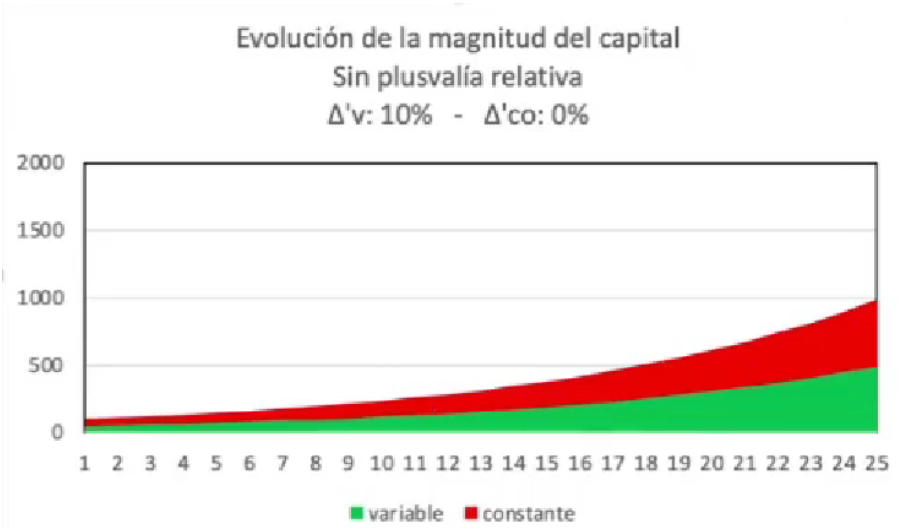
Sin plusvalía relativa
p': fija
co: fija
$\Delta' c = \Delta' v$
$\Delta' (c+v) = \Delta' v$

First, the rate of surplus value is fixed because there is no change in the technical composition of capital. The organic composition is fixed, it is given. And so what is going to happen is that constant capital is going to grow in the same proportion as variable capital is growing. If the constant capital is doubled, the variable capital is also doubled because these are the technical bases that are given at the starting point. And this implies at the same time that the rate of growth of total capital is the same as the rate of growth of variable capital. So, these are the conditions that correspond to how the demand for labor power evolves—that is, how variable capital evolves—if there were not if there were not that technical change governed by the production of relative surplus value. Was this understood, what does each of these elements that is here mean? I don't see them, so I can't know if... [Several participants say yes] So, the first thing we are going to look at is what happens relatively with the evolution of constant capital with respect to variable capital.

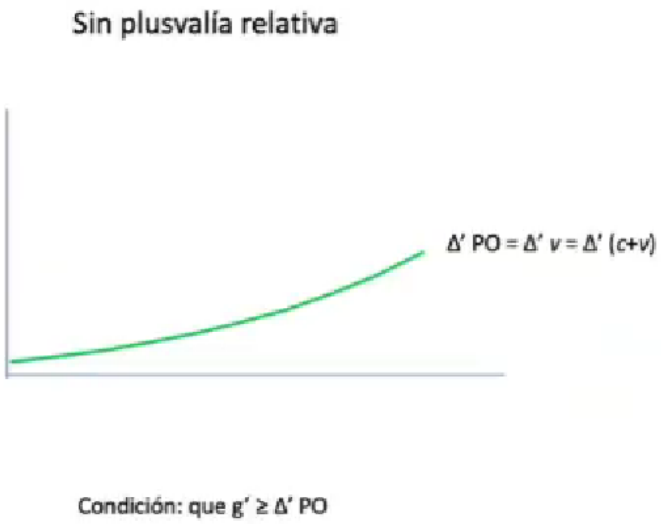


It is an example that is unfolded over 25 periods, simply to take this expression, and arbitrarily I start from an organic composition of capital that is "1": constant capital has the same magnitude as variable capital. Let's assume that the growth rate of variable capital [Δ'v] is 10% per annum or per period, and the growth rate of organic composition [Δ'co] is 0%. The result, throughout the period under consideration, is that the organic composition does not change: the relative composition of capital remains constant; if we are taking how each of these two parts is distributed within the total capital and the total capital is always 100%. From this relative evolution, what we are going to move on is to look at it in absolute terms, what was happening with the two capitals[313].

[313] On this slide it mistakenly said "With relative surplus value", I have left the corrected version.


Evolución de la magnitud del capital
Sin plusvalía relativa
Δ'v: 10% - Δ'co: 0%
2000
1500
1000
500
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25
variable
constante

[…] We start from a capital where variable capital grows by 10% per year (with which the demand for labor power grows by 10% per year) and constant capital, since the organic composition is always the same, also grows at 10% per year. The organic composition remains the same in the end [in both schemes], and here [the present scheme] the magnitude of the two portions of capital has increased in the same proportion. When one looks, then, at the condition for a working population growing at a certain rate to always find a buyer for its labor power without the production of relative surplus value, it is synthesized in this graph:



If the rate of profit, considering that all surplus value is converted into new capital, is at least equal to the growth of the working population (now we will see what happens when it is *greater* than the growth of the working population), then the total capital can grow at the same rate as that working population grows. Variable capital grows at this rate and the working population always finds a buyer for its labor power. What does Marx pose when he looks at this situation of accumulation without there being relative surplus value? That it may happen that the speed of growth of capital is greater than the speed with which the supply of labor power grows. In this case, at the speed with which the working population is growing. In which case, what is going to happen is that there is going to be an

insufficiency of the working population, like every commodity that is missing, it is going to be sold above value, and if the speed of growth of capital, because its rate of profit is so much higher than the rate of growth of the working population, Labor power will be sold more and more above value until, apparently, a point could be reached at which all the surplus value is absorbed by the price of labor power. And then the fantasy appears that in the absence of technical change this situation could occur and the capitalist mode of production could be overcome in this way: that all surplus value would be converted into wages. And what Marx develops next is: the very law of capital accumulation is going to be presented on the side of... If labor power is sold above value, the rate of profit will decrease; the decrease in the rate of profit slows down the rate of accumulation; And that movement is going to end up leading to the situation again, to the payment of the labor force for its value.

So, I ask up to here, if this is clear. I did not place much emphasis on this explanation: the rate of profit as the one that measures the speed at which capital can grow. I put it for this: considering that all surplus value is converted into new capital, if the rate of profit is 10% on capital, that capital can grow by 10%. If the rate of profit is 20% and all its surplus value is converted into new capital, it can grow by 20%. So, so far, I ask if there is anything to clarify, to return, to discuss. [...] Is there anything you want to raise in this so far?

Javiera: Juan, can you put the Power back on? There in the fifth slide ["Evolution of the magnitude of capital"], perhaps I did not understand, shouldn't variable capital be greater there?

JIC: Variable capital is growing by 10% per period. Since what is implicit in this is: since the organic composition is always the same, this means that constant capital is also growing by 10% for the period. It is not clear to me what the doubt is.

Javiera: I kind of missed where Marx goes in the development, because what begins to speak at the beginning is that there is indeed a distance between one and the other...

JIC: Let's see if I follow you. This is placed in the normality of the sale of labor power always for its value. The possibility that labor power would be sold above value because there is a lack of workers is... The very laws of accumulation return it to normal. Capital begins to grow more slowly and then, if one is assuming a given growth of the working population, what is going to begin to happen is that there will be a surplus of labor power and then the sale of labor power for its value will be returned.

That is why what is put here [slide "No relative surplus value"] is: if the rate of profit is equal to the speed with which it is growing—and all of it is accumulated, there would never be either a surplus or a lack of working population. If the rate of profit were less than the rate with which the working population grows without technical change, then there would be a question that would really originate from the rate of growth of the working population. It would no longer be that what happens is that capital... That is to say, it would happen that capital grows too

slowly with respect to the growth of the working population. But what we are going to see next is how capital, necessarily—no matter how fast the working population grows—is going to generate surplus working population. I don't know if there are any left

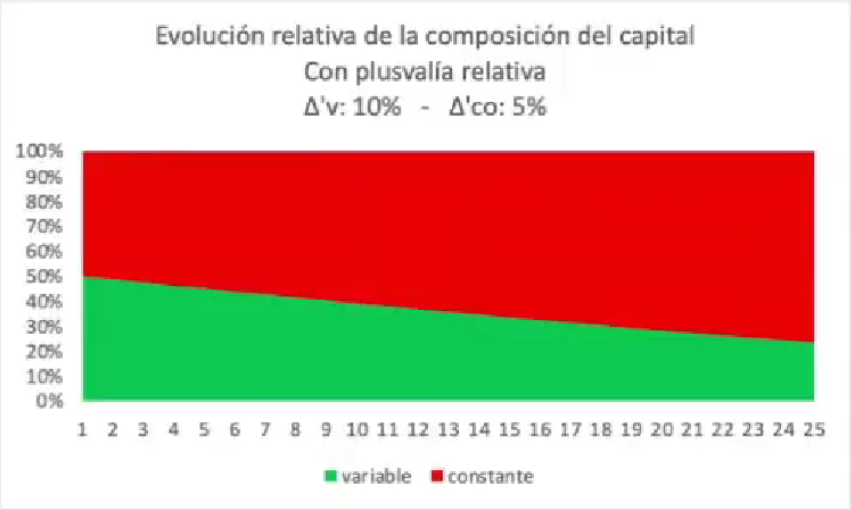
Javiera: Yes, yes.

Let us pass to the situation of the production of relative surplus value and return, above all, to the contrast of the two situations.

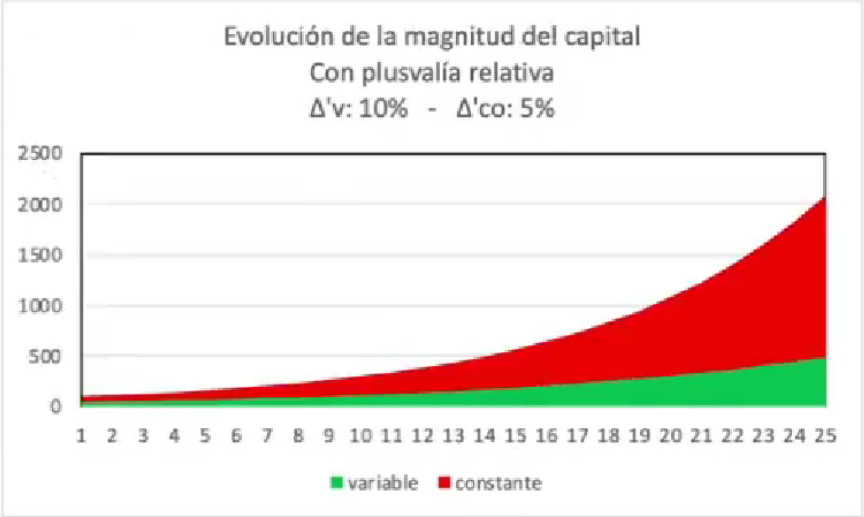
Determinantes formales del crecimiento absoluto y relativo de la demenda de fuerza de trabajo con la acumulación de capital

Sin plusvalía relativa	Con plusvalía relativa
p': fija	p': creciente
co: fija	co: creciente
$\Delta' c = \Delta' v$	$\Delta' c > \Delta' v$
$\Delta' (c+v) = \Delta' v$	$\Delta' (c+v) > \Delta' v$
	$\Delta' (c+v) < \Delta' c$

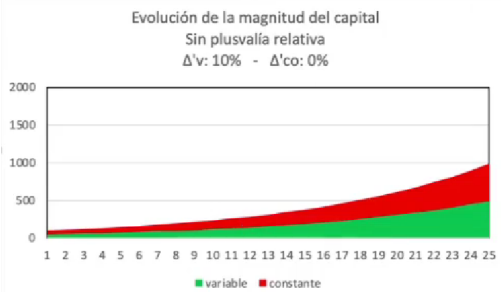
Well, without relative surplus value, we had seen, it was: fixed rate of surplus value. And here [with relative surplus value] there is a growing rate of surplus value because the productivity of labor increases; This increase in the productivity of labour, insofar as it is reflected in the determination of the value of the means of subsistence of the workers, implies a decrease in the value of labour power, an increase in the rate of surplus value. The organic composition of capital is increasing because machinery must be incorporated to increase the productivity of labour, and because the productivity of labour increases, the constant capital put into raw materials grows faster than the growth of variable capital. And now, the velocity of growth of constant capital is no longer equal to the velocity of growth of variable capital, but is greater because of what I just said: the constant capital put into the machinery grows at the expense of variable capital in relative terms, let's put it in absolute terms: it grows at the expense of the growth of variable capital... In general terms, there was what Marx proposes that at times it is an absolute decrease, but at the same time he proposes a growth in the mass of variable capital. And that, consequently, total capital, constant + variable capital, grows faster than variable capital, and that total capital, since it has the component of constant capital that pulls it up, but the component of variable capital that makes it grow more slowly, grows more slowly than constant capital. And then, with these formal determinants, what about the organic composition of capital in relative terms?



It starts at 1:1, as we had before. Now: variable capital continues to grow at 10% and organic composition grows at 5% per year. The two pieces of information are arbitrary, and... First I had done it with 10% per year organic composition, but the graphs were out of scale and I couldn't see the comparisons, so I arbitrarily put 5%. Even with a lower growth rate of the organic composition, let's see the effect this has. So, each time, if one were to leave the total capital alone, like 100, the variable capital is a smaller and smaller part of the total capital. And this, in absolute terms, will be reflected in this way:



In order for variable capital to grow at 10% per year, the same as it grew there[314], and reach the same level as it did there, if here the total capital, the sum of


Evolución de la magnitud del capital
Sin plusvalía relativa
Δ'v: 10% - Δ'co: 0%
2000
1500
1000
500
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25
variable
constante

314

the two was multiplied by 10, because down here it is 100, and it reached 1000, now, to be able to sustain a 10% growth in the demand for labor power, the total capital has to reach just over 2000. Why? Because constant capital is growing rapidly, with the growth of the organic composition, and then, constant capital grows more than if here [slide above] it went from 100 to 2000, constant capital went from 50 to what is here [right of the whole], which I do not dare to calculate. But is this situation understandable? This is the reflection of the growth of constant capital faster than the growth of variable capital. And how, in order to sustain the growth of variable capital, constant capital has to grow faster and faster. Is this clear?

Javiera: Yes. Hey, John, but the graph on plate 5 is of absolute surplus value, then.

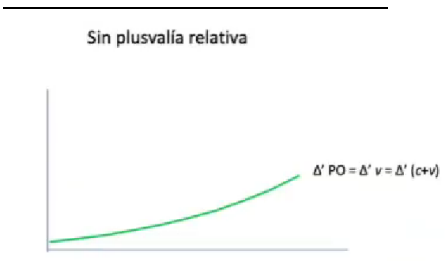
JIC: The one in the 5th is only with absolute surplus value.

Javiera: Ah, you see, that's why I got confused, because it says "relative", that's why I asked you that question.

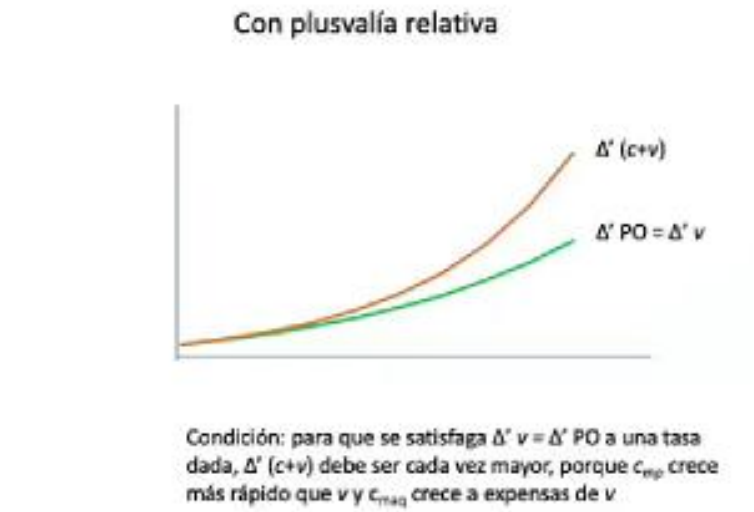
JIC: No, no, that's why there is no change in the organic composition here.

Javiera Dale, that's absolute, then. That's why I told you, why isn't the distance shown?

JIC: No, and the title is wrong. Because I made them, remade them, lost the file in half.... Wait until I correct it now, so I don't... […] So, [...] this is the contrast with that evolution. In order to sustain a growth or a constant level of demand for labor power with the increase in the organic composition of capital, with the increase in the technical composition of capital governed by the production of relative surplus value, capital has to grow rapidly. Total capital, because a part of it is becoming larger, is constant, in order to be able to sustain a variable capital or a growth of the given variable capital, constant capital has to grow much more rapidly than variable capital. And so, here we move on to the same relative situation that we had here without relative surplus value[315], which was: since total capital grows at the same rate as variable capital, the demand for labor power can grow at a given rate, which if it corresponds to the speed of growth of total capital, it will always find a buyer for that labor power.

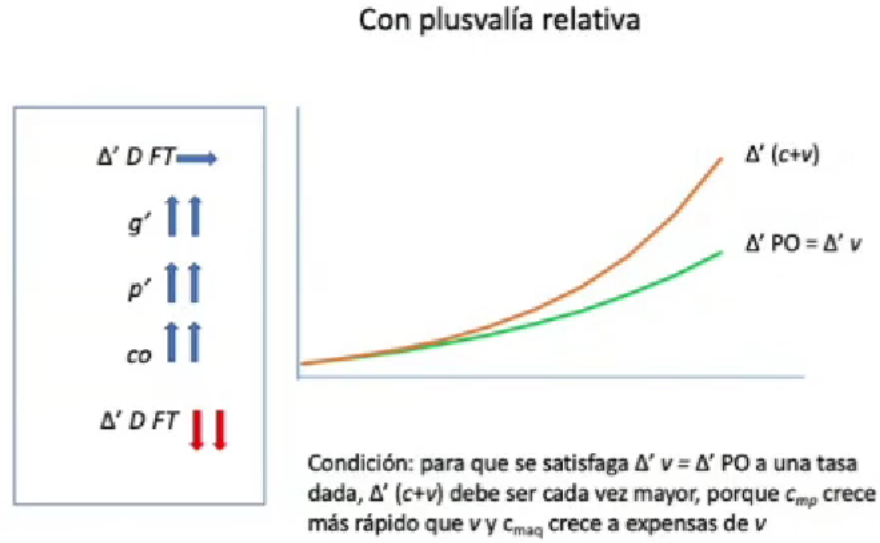


315 Condición: que g' ≥ Δ' PO


Con plusvalía relativa
Δ' (c+v)
Δ' PO = Δ' v
Condición: para que se satisfaga Δ' v = Δ' PO a una tasa dada, Δ' (c+v) debe ser cada vez mayor, porque c_{mp} crece más rápido que v y c_{maq} crece a expensas de v

And on the other hand, in the production of relative surplus value, the condition for the growth of variable capital to accompany the growth of the supply of labour at a given rate is that the speed with which total capital grows must be greater and greater. For the constant capital put into raw materials grows faster than the variable capital, and the constant capital put into machinery grows at the expense of the variable capital. So, what appears is that only under this condition can the demand for power and labor be sustained. Here compared to a given growth of the working population (I did not know how to express it graphically, but it can be done, it should be possible to do so with a working population that is fixed).

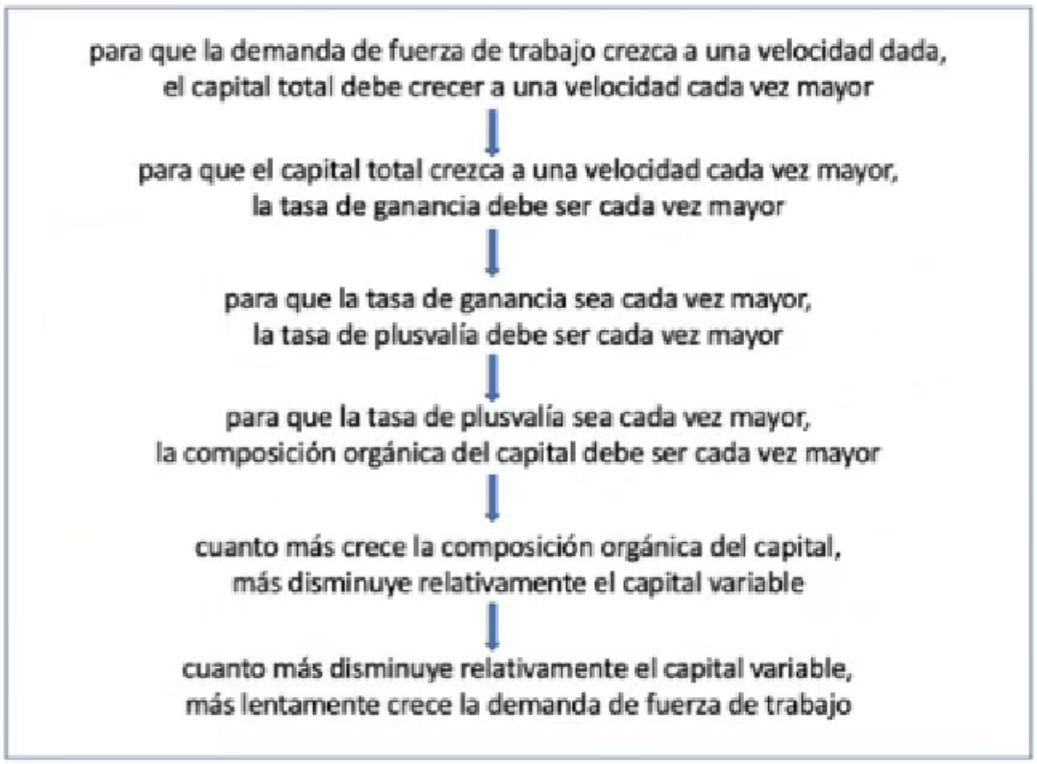
These are the conditions for the working population to be able to find a buyer for its labour power, so that it does not exceed the needs that capital has for that labour power: the total capital has to grow faster and faster. And then, here this is going to appear like this.


Con plusvalía relativa
Δ' D FT
g'
p'
co
Δ' D FT
Δ' (c+v)
Δ' PO = Δ' v
Condición: para que se satisfaga Δ' v = Δ' PO a una tasa dada, Δ' (c+v) debe ser cada vez mayor, porque c_{mp} crece más rápido que v y c_{maq} crece a expensas de v

In order for the rate at which the demand for labour power is to grow constant, to always grow at a given rate (this is always represented by the horizontal arrow),

it is necessary for total capital to grow faster and faster. In order for total capital to grow faster and faster, the rate of profit must be higher and higher: there must be an ever higher proportion of surplus value available for accumulation in relation to total capital. For the rate of profit to be higher and higher, it is necessary for the rate of surplus value to rise, to be higher and higher, because with the rate of surplus value multiplied, the rate of profit will increase. In order for the rate of surplus value to be higher and higher, the organic composition of capital must be higher and higher. In order for labor productivity to grow, machinery must be incorporated [...].

We have to make the rate of surplus value higher and higher, the organic composition of capital must be higher and higher. And what happens when the organic composition of capital grows? This negatively affects the demand for labour power, because a greater part of that surplus value that under previous technical conditions would have gone to buy labour power (it would have become variable capital) is now converted into constant capital. And consequently, the increase in organic composition pulls down the demand for labor power. So how do you offset this downward pull to sustain the growth in labor force demand? The rate of profit needs to grow even more. For this, it is necessary for the rate of surplus value to grow even more, which has as a condition that the organic composition of capital grows even more, and what this does is to throw down the demand for labor power more. This is what I have just said synthesized, so I leave it for the record, but I am not going to read it:


para que la demanda de fuerza de trabajo crezca a una velocidad dada,
el capital total debe crecer a una velocidad cada vez mayor
para que el capital total crezca a una velocidad cada vez mayor,
la tasa de ganancia debe ser cada vez mayor
para que la tasa de ganancia sea cada vez mayor,
la tasa de plusvalía debe ser cada vez mayor
para que la tasa de plusvalía sea cada vez mayor,
la composición orgánica del capital debe ser cada vez mayor
cuanto más crece la composición orgánica del capital,
más disminuye relativamente el capital variable
cuanto más disminuye relativamente el capital variable,
más lentamente crece la demanda de fuerza de trabajo

The conclusion of this is precisely that, inevitably, the accumulation of capital generates this surplus working population, this surplus working population

relative to the needs of capital. It is the very mechanics of the movement of capital accumulation that generates relative overpopulation.

To return to all this, I always give this example, which is most vulgar. I have a water tank. The water enters from above, but it turns out that below, the tank has a hole through which the water escapes. So, in order to keep the tank full, I have to put more water flow from the top. But that increase in the flow of water from above makes the hole below larger, so the water comes out more quickly. So, I have to increase the inlet flow more, and that makes the outlet hole bigger and the water comes out faster. That tank will never be able to be full, it will not be able to be kept full because the same thing that would fill it is what empties it. And we have the same thing here then in the movement of the needs of capital by labour-power: the same thing that would increase the need for capital by the demand for labour-power is what makes it decrease. Was this followed?

This is simply, schematically, to reflect, to make the synthesis of the unfolding that Marx is making in terms of the need for capital to generate this relative workers' overpopulation, with the character of a tendency. And now we're going to look at the other development that it makes. But... Edgardo, I don't know how much of this you could have gone on...

Edgardo: Well, well, that graph you showed at the end is a synthesis of the whole plot. What I have left of doubt is... In other words, the tendency to the existence of this relative overpopulation of workers is clear to me, but if that tendency in turn has cycles.

JIC: This is what we would look at now. Because Marx in the first step presents it as a tendency, and then he presents it... Why does it appear first in one form and then in the other? Because, so to speak, the essence of the determination is this movement to generate a working population that is left over. But then, what is going to appear is: what capital generates, in reality, what it does is feed its accumulation. It would seem, when one looks at the tendency: well, there is a surplus of the working population and it has been put aside and capital has gone its way. And now the first thing that appears is: in reality, what is left over, it serves capital (it cannot use them because it has too much and yet it serves it) to multiply its accumulation capacity and to make its accumulation more fluid, which multiplies its capacity. Then: first it appears as a result, and then it appears as a condition, so to speak, as the basis for the accumulation of capital itself. I don't know if you want to raise anything else before moving on to that.

Javiera: Yes, I have the doubt, maybe I missed it. But in this part of development... is the rate of profit going to appear?

JIC: No.

Javiera: Ah, come on, it's just that since I wanted to ask why... You kind of put it on and I said: what happened?

JIC: The reason... There are two things that play a role in this. In order to look at the speed with which capital accumulates, one must look at the rate of profit. And to look at why the increase in organic composition, if one simply takes that if the rate of surplus value increases, the organic composition increases, what is missing is what marks the capacity of total capital to accumulate. Because there is the rate of surplus value only in relation to variable capital, and the organic composition affects what is the capacity of total capital to accumulate twice, because it raises the rate of surplus value, but it raises the weight of constant capital, but it does not measure how much it affects it. So, at least for the form of development that I wanted to do, I need to appeal to the rate of profit (without talking about any trend or anything about the rate of profit, this simply measures the evolution for me).

Why can I appeal to the rate of profit without lacking the coherence of development? Because the formal reference to the rate of profit comes before, when you measure how capital is valued, and well, you had up to that point the valuation measured by the rate of surplus value, and you get this formal relationship that is the rate of profit. So, partly out of necessity for exposure, partly because of the excuse that it was already in place before, I appeal to be able to set the rate of profit. Otherwise, I can't construct the development scheme of what happens to a component, how one plays by multiplying, sustaining the demand for labor power, why capital has to accumulate, what measures that total capital has to grow faster and faster... And what that measures is what happens to the rate of profit, because that's what enables an ever faster growth of total capital.

Javiera: So, to close the argument, we are understanding it from that formal reference as the set of profits of the... I mean... How are we understanding it?

JIC: As the ratio between surplus value and the total capital that needs to be advanced to generate that surplus value. That's the relationship. I note, I think it is clear: here we are looking at the movement of the total capital of society.

Well, then let's get to the role it plays in fueling capital accumulation. The first thing that is going to appear is this industrial reserve army that allows capital to satisfy that need that when we saw the organic unity of the general social relation, when we start from: this is a relationship between people that has the form of no relation between people, and we arrive at the relation between things and people as the personification of those things, commodities, and we saw the antagonistic relationship between capitalist and worker, that which Marx developed on the side of the length of the working day, we appealed to the need for capital to have labor power available so that the flow of accumulation is not interrupted. But we put it as a necessity that developed in the form of class struggle, etc.

What we have now before us is the concrete form through which capital satisfies this need that it has, and the concrete form is the generation of this industrial reserve army. And this is where Marx is going to raise the cyclical character, where he is going to refer to a ten-year cycle. Then cycles of a different nature appear, but yes, indeed, there is a cycle of a ten-year nature that he is going to call the "industrial cycle" where accumulation develops rapidly, production expands, and suddenly begins to stagnate, production is surplus. For all this

development it is necessary to have this industrial reserve army, which makes it an active industrial army. And the moments that follow this, where contraction is coming, are going to regenerate the industrial reserve army. Marx will refer to this cycle by saying that it is not known in previous epochs of humanity, and associates it with the development of modern industry, where the development of machinery plays a central role. When one makes the calculation through certain indicators, it is true that the mechanism, the reason, is typical of the capitalist mode of production, but the movements that last approximately 10 years go back quite far in the development of the capitalist mode of production. Marx does not give here an explanation of why 10 years, he is simply looking at a concrete manifestation of the development of accumulation.

So, what he is going to propose is: in contrast to what happened when we looked at the absence of production of relative surplus value (then, the absence of change in the technical composition of capital), what appeared was that capital had to wait, when it expanded, until the working population, by selling labor power above value because it was lacking, It would multiply rapidly, and then the time would come when he would have the additional workers. And after looking at that in that chapter what he's going to say is: if capital had to depend on this, it couldn't work. Now what appears is how capital does not need to depend on what happens to the mass of the working population in order to respond to its needs to incorporate more workers or to reduce the number of workers.

If we looked at the situation without relative surplus value how the need for capital that had for workers could be adjusted, what appeared to us was this: if labor power is sold above value, accumulation slows down. And I lacked in the previous part the proposals of: when labor power is sold in good conditions, the working population grows. Now, when we are looking at this, there is an element that is key in the flow of the supply of labor power, which does not depend on what happens with the growth of the working population. When, if for some reason, in the phase of expansion that Marx proposes where the demand for labor forces grows and the industrial reserve army can even be exhausted (or almost exhausted, because it is never exhausted), wages rise and that decreases the rate of profit and slows down accumulation. But the new determinant that appears here is something that we saw when we looked at what happens with the relationship between the worker's salary and the incorporation of machinery.

And what we had seen is that, since the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery is that the dead labor that is added has to be less than the paid living labor that is saved, the higher the wages, the easier it is to incorporate machinery. Because it is easier to develop a machine that does not incorporate so much dead labor, that does not incorporate so much constant capital into the value of each unit produced, than to incorporate, to develop a machine that incorporates less value to that of each unit produced. That is: it is easier to incorporate a machine that – let's put it this way – doubles the productivity of labor and adds 10 to the value of each unit, than to develop a machine that doubles the productivity of labor and only adds 5 to the value of each unit of product. And so, the higher the wage, the easier it is to substitute living labor for dead labor. To incorporate a machine which adds a certain magnitude, a certain constant capital consumed to the value

of each unit of commodities, and saves a larger quantity of paid living labour. I made a concoction at the end... was it understood? If you have patience, we are going to look at what we had from the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery.

I'm going to share the screen. This was what we had [...][316]. So, now going back to what we're looking at now, the more expensive the workforce, the easier it is to incorporate machinery. And then at the moment of the peak of the movement of the expansion cycle, when the demand for labor power grows, and this can imply that the industrial reserve army is exhausted and that labor power begins to be paid above value, that increase in the price of labor power not only pulls down surplus value and, therefore, the power that capital has to grow, but also makes it easier to incorporate machinery. And the incorporation of machinery frees up labor power. So, what Marx is going to propose there is: capital does not have to wait for the working population to grow, it incorporates more machinery encouraged by the relative scarcity of the labor force, that makes it easier for it to incorporate machinery, and it makes the industrial reserve army grow or replenish.

[...] When we spoke of the need for capital to have surplus labor power, we made a reference, which at that time we did not call "industrial reserve army," but now we can call it by its name. And that reference is the following. We had said that the unemployment rate is a measure of what we now have as a surplus working population, as an industrial reserve army. When the unemployment rate falls below 3%, sometimes even 4%, it is said that capital lacks workers, that it lacks the supply of labor power. And when you say "4% unemployment rate", what you are saying is that capital has 4% of the labor force left over. Well, that surplus relative to 4% for capital is insufficient, it begins to appear as a barrier to accumulation. So, what this is going to show is that capital never exhausts the industrial reserve army; before it is exhausted, the same mechanisms of the movement of accumulation that make accumulation slower because the available surplus value is decreasing and facilitate the incorporation of machinery, accelerate the incorporation of machinery and restore the normality of the industrial reserve army, which is above that statistical measurement, of that 3-4% criterion (3-4% has not existed for many years, but hey). So we have this movement of capital with which it is capital that regulates the industrial reserve army.

And Marx here is going to make an observation that is a mechanical character of determination. And what he is going to say is: this ten-year cycle begins, and that periodicity engenders by itself a continuous movement of a cyclical nature. Mechanically, the fact of having started with a process of these characteristics... I say: the first cycle engenders that this continues to have a cyclical movement, which is... In reality, the determination that is at stake goes beyond the mechanical repetition of the cycle. Marx is going to say: what is the effect becomes a cause, the effect is a cyclical movement, it becomes a cause of itself. But well, this observation, and the observation that even political economy realizes that there is this movement and that the presence of the industrial reserve army is a condition for

[316] I skip over the whole explanation that repeats what we already saw in session 41 about the capitalist limit to the incorporation of machinery and I continue with the conclusion linked to the development of the surplus working population.

the reproduction of the process of capital accumulation. Did anyone want to ask something?

Javiera: I have a question, but I think it beat me to it. I think it would be better addressed later when we see the types of surplus population, but I'll still throw it at you. Because it was a function of what you said before, that capital always has a mass of population waiting there, as if latent, and I was thinking about this in the countryside, that it often happens [...] the typical claim of capital that there is a lack of labor force in the countryside, and that historically it has been said that in the countryside there is always a latent population. So, I kind of get struck by that movement that no... How can it be missing if there is a workforce there always available?

JIC: I would say that we will see it when we see the leftover population of latent, and there we stop at that. Yes, with this observation: there are times when the surplus population decreases substantially, in those moments of boom, it decreases substantially. And it may happen that there is no latent surplus population, that it is absorbed. And in fact, in the case of Argentine history, there are times when there are indeed areas, if not of the entire country, but there are areas that are left without latent surplus population, they are absorbed. But let's look at that when we get to the specific case of the surplus population.

I add one more thing in relation to the political forms in this movement of a cyclical nature. Suppose that [...] we are in the expansion phase, and the data that appears is that the labor force begins to be sold above value. When this movement occurs, the two opposing movements of capital are: accumulation slows down, the substitution of living labour for dead labour is accelerated; This generates a growth of the surplus working population, which translates into the sharpening of competition among workers to sell their labor power, the fall of wages and the sale of labor power below value. Now the sale of labor power below value has the opposite effect of what we have just seen: since labor power is sold below value, this frees up surplus value for and accelerates accumulation. And since the labor force has become relatively cheaper, that makes it slower, more difficult, to replace living labor with dead labor. Then, the movement of workers through machinery slows down.

When, on this double basis, a new phase of expansion of capital accumulation begins, it is being sold below value, the demand for labor power begins to grow... That is the moment when the trade union organizations of the working class (and the political organizations as soon as it raises this question) appear to have strength because they are expressing something that corresponds to the movement of capital. Capital is in need of more labor power and that is what will give strength to the union organization of the working class. That strength that the union organization has is what springs from the movement of capital and it will seem to be reflected as if it had simply arisen from the union action in the increase of wages, in the improvement of the conditions of sale of labor power.

When the opposite phase comes, what happens is that there is a surplus of labor power, the competition among the workers to sell their labor power individually

becomes more acute, and this takes the political form of the loss of strength of the trade union organization of the working class. This loss of strength will be reflected, expressed in the fall in wages, until the new phase opens. So, when one wants to answer why the trade union organization of the working class has moments in which it has strength and moments in which it has no strength, that explanation must be sought in what is happening with the cyclical movement of capital accumulation. I mean, when one wants to ask about the cyclical fluctuations of the labor force, there are other determinations that transcend that cyclical movement, but I think it is important to emphasize this. I don't know if it's clear, if they agree, if they don't agree...

Javiera: Yes, I imagine that, for example, you were referring to what happened, an example that you also give, which is what happens with the English with Thatcher, when they are there in the middle of the strike and... and Thatcher arrives and falls.

JIC: Yes, it is a cyclical movement that transcends this 10-year movement, it corresponds to a phase of a cyclical movement that is much sharper and much broader in time than the 10-year movement. But that's it.

Javiera: But wait for me: when you say "movements", that you have to go and look at the cyclical movement of capital accumulation, what are you referring to?

JIC: I'm going to take it in this movement in Argentina (I don't know if I answer), during the 21st century, with the peculiarity of capital accumulation in Argentina or whatever. What is happening with a cycle that is expressing a crisis in capital accumulation? Late 90s and early 2000s. There is a surplus of labor, the unemployment rate rises to about 25%, the underemployment rate rises by the same amount, the union organization has no strength. If one stops to look at the political forms... (Well, but I don't want to get sidetracked with that), one of the political ways is that the government, which did not appear as a representative... or the political line that appeared to be at odds with the trade union movement, the workers' trade union organisation, was in the exercise of government. Unemployment is going to explode, and the political form that this is going to take cannot be expressed by that government confronted with the open enemy of the trade union movement, but can only be expressed by a government, a political line to which the trade union movement responds. There is a sudden multiplication of unemployment, a sharp fall in real wages, and the labor union movement is totally still. And it was only two years after those falls – because a process of recovery began, first based, precisely, on the cheapness of the labor force, then the demand for labor power began to resurface – that is where there began to be actions by the main labor movement in Argentina.

Then, for reasons that are irrelevant, there is a strong expansion of capital accumulation in Argentina that is linked to the increase in the price of agricultural commodities on the world market and the role played by land rent in Argentina, but let us leave it aside. And what is going to appear? There is a strong expansion of the Argentine economy, of recovery of industrial production, and there is a strong rise in the demand for labor force. And among the things that happen is that,

particularly for the industrial sector workforce, the previous phase had liquidated that workforce. So, there is no labor force with these productive attributes, and the union organization of the working class has the strength to raise wages. The demand for labor power has grown, there is no labor force with the productive attributes that capital requires, and this is going to be manifested in union relations as the strength that the workers' union organization has to... appears imposing the increase in wages. That phase is over and even part of that union organization goes on to vote for the political line that is going to make the liquidation and the fall in wages. Because it seems that an indefinite boom is going to follow, and that this new political line is going to be the one that is going to express the indefinite boom, and the union organization is left without strength, there is a gross fall in wages and it is not able to face the gross fall in wages.

It was in very abstract terms, but what I wanted to express with all this is: to answer why the working class at certain times has political and trade union strength, and why at certain times it does not have it, one cannot go looking for it because it has treacherous leaders or because it has little clarity in its lines of action or because it makes mistakes and did not consider something. but what he has to go looking for as the cause of these... More than as a cause: it has to look for the need for this increase or loss of political strength of the working class, when these gains and losses have a cyclical character, in what happens with the movement of capital accumulation. I don't know if it was clearer. And if that later takes shape in combative leaders, in traitorous leaders... because if you don't have strength, it's clear that the lack of strength is not going to be expressed by a combative leader, nor is strength going to be expressed by a leader who gives in quickly. So, when you look at what individual subjectivity is going to be the carrier, the visible face of each of these movements, you have to look for what is happening with the cyclical movement of capital accumulation.

Javiera: But then that means that the personification, say, of the force, of the working class is not necessarily going to be personified in a political organization, let's say, it is not necessarily going to be expressed in that way.

JIC: It is going to be expressed in political organizations that are going to have different characters. At the time of its boom it will be a strong political organization; at the moment of the fall of the cycle, what is going to appear is... weak political organizations. And if it becomes more acute, it gets weaker and weaker, until the opposite phase comes and then it is reversed. I'm taking it in very... that they are not abstract movements of the human spirit or the spirit of the working class, that it is not a question that arises from which leaders it has: they have the leaders who express what strength the working class has at any given moment. I insist again: always looking at this cyclical determination. Then, it depends on the movement, beyond the cyclical movement, what character these organizations have. But well, we are going to talk about the cycles in Volume 3, and there we return to this in more detail and the political expressions, how the cyclical movement takes shape in the political and trade union organization of the working class.

I think we have now... Well, what appeared here was how the ideologues of capital turn this determination around. After stating that there is a need for a surplus of workers, the proposal made by the ideologues of capital is that there are too many workers because the workers do not control their process of biological reproduction and do not adjust their reproduction process to the means of subsistence at their disposal. And he is going to synthesize it... Well, it's still a lot longer. We will follow him next Wednesday. The development that is going to revolve basically around this of... I summarize it with this: it is a contradictory need of capital that has surplus labor power and that generates this surplus working population, and that then complains that there is a surplus working population. Are we up to here?

Javiera: We're finishing point 3, aren't we?

JIC: We are finishing point 3. Now we have to enter into the concrete forms, the general forms, the specific forms of the surplus working population. Well, then there is the synthesis in the general law of accumulation, capitalist, but I would say that in no more than three meetings we finish the eastern chapter and enter the last chapter. So, at the beginning of May, I don't know how, but we're going to try to finish there.

[III]

[...] In fact, we had come to see the general determination of the generation of the surplus working population and we had been seeing the effect of that generation on the cyclical movements of capital accumulation, what role it plays in those cyclical movements. What we lack from this whole section revolves more or less around this, it expands on something, I advanced some things last time, but well, we see again in any case some of the issues that are going to appear.

The first thing that is going to appear is, once the contradiction that the capitalist mode of production has of needing surplus labor power, and at the same time presents it inverted, as a problem of growth of the working population, it is a growth of the supply of labor power, which is not caused by capital, but it is caused by this movement of the working population, which appeared in the first place, and which then appears to capital to be not enough for what the working population is growing, and at the same time it has more than enough beyond what the working population is growing. What Marx is going to pose immediately is the aspects that sharpen this movement towards the relative overpopulation of the working population.

The first aspect that he is going to deal with is, from the point of view of the individual capitalist, he has an interest in obtaining the greatest amount of labor by extracting it from the fewest possible workers, which is going to be projected in the prolongation of the working day and, Marx is going to argue, that the greater the scale of production, the more the capitalist's aim of using as few workers as possible tends to appear. We had seen, when we looked at the question of what

happened to a given mass of labor power available to capital, we had seen that this total mass of labor power that capital is going to demand does not have an immediate, simple relationship with the number of workers employed, because it is precisely mediated by the duration of the day. Then this question is going to appear.

A second tendency that capital that multiplies the workers' overpopulation will have is that it will tend to extract the greatest possible amount of labor from the fewest possible workers or with the same mass of variable capital. And this is the increase in the intensity of work. Then, from the mass of labor that capital requires, now with greater intensity, it extracts it, disposes of it from a smaller number of workers. Marx also recalls, [...] he proposes the replacement of workers with more development of their productive attributes by younger workers, by less skilled workers, and here there will appear a substitution of men for women and the development of child labor as well. As a result, the most skilled workers who have gone through a long period of apprenticeship, or the types of work that required a long period of apprenticeship, are decreasing. This makes available to capital early on a greater mass of labor power with the incorporation of women's labor, the development of child labor, etc., and to the same total mass of the working population that it previously had, it adds to the supply of labor power this other labor force, and the result is that it has more acute surpluses. And this movement is accelerated, which thanks to the incorporation of these three elements that had appeared (fewer workers with longer working hours, greater intensity of work and incorporation of more individuals into the supply of labor power) allows it to accelerate the formation of this relative overpopulation, which is even faster than what simply arises from the substitution of variable capital by constant capital. He also notes that the development of machinery is requiring relatively less and less manpower.

Then, among the developments that he is making, I thought it was necessary to highlight some movements that also add to this exacerbation. The first move is to sharpen competition among workers. The more intensely the workers work, the longer the working day, the more this multiplication of the surplus working population becomes more acute, and as the competition between the workers for who sells the labor power becomes more acute in the face of this condition of multiplication of the surplus, this allows capital to put more pressure on the workers. coerce them more strongly to extract more labor power from them, and consequently also has the effect of multiplying the generation of the surplus of workers.

So, by way of synthesis, what is going to appear is something that I already raised last time, in which the movement of wages is regulated not by what happens with the total mass of the working population that is put to work, but with the oscillating mass of the part of the working population that is part of the *active industrial army*. Marx is going to ask it, and what proportion of the working population is part of the *industrial reserve army*. So what he is going to propose is: in periods of stagnation and average prosperity, the industrial reserve army puts pressure on the workers who are active, and in the times of overproduction and accelerated expansion, the presence of the industrial reserve army slows down the

strength that the active army would have in the face of that situation. And that then, the law of supply and demand of labor power is sustained, or has at its base what happens with this relative overpopulation. And that because of the permanent existence of the industrial reserve army, then, the movement of the relationship between supply and demand of labor power never — even in the most prosperous moments — affects the movement of capital accumulation.

And then also, by way of synthesis of what has been developing, it returns to the reference of the 10-year industrial cycles, and what is happening at each moment with the march of accumulation, is reflected in what is happening with the mass of the industrial reserve army. And that the availability of labor power for capital does not depend on the absolute movements of the working population, but has at its base what happens to this industrial reserve army. He says that the ideologues of capital—he makes the critique again—invert this and present it as meaning that the supply and demand of labor power is governed by the process of biological reproduction of the working population, as if the movement of that reproduction could satisfy the oscillating demands of capital within 10 years.

[…] Well, then we have this movement in which biological reproduction, the period of biological reproduction of the working population in order to be able to add labor power to the process of capital accumulation transcends the movements of 10 years, and it is clear that the satisfaction of the needs of capital does not depend on that, but that capital regulates the satisfaction of its needs by labor power through the growth and decrease of the Industrial Reserve Army. Last time we had seen very schematically a mechanism of what happens when, eventually, due to the expansion phase, wages begin to rise; We had the double mechanism that this lowers the surplus value that capital is extracting from its workers, consequently lowers the rate of profit, that slows down accumulation, slows down the demand for labor power, but above all, the higher the wages, the easier it is to substitute living labor for dead labor. then technical development is accelerated, more workers are displaced from the production process, and with that, between the slower accumulation and the accelerated incorporation of machinery, the availability of surplus labor power with which capital will sustain its accumulation is recovered, reestablished. And that if we reach the opposite phase, low wages multiply the accumulation of capital, the capacity for accumulation, and make it more difficult to incorporate machinery; which, with a surplus population because accumulation is strongly contracted, the capacity of capital to accumulate is sustained.

Then there is an example that Marx gives of how political economy gives as the cause of one phenomenon the appearance of another. And this is the case that Marx is going to develop by saying that suddenly a certain sphere of social production finds itself with an expanded demand, it is in a favorable conjuncture, that causes profits in that branch to multiply, that capital flows into the branch, and that greater influx of capital is reflected in an increase in the demand for labor power for that branch or for that sphere. and at that first moment, wages in the sphere rise. When this situation normalizes, when the expansion of production and conditions return to normal, wages begin to fall. And so political economy explains the fall in wages by the increase in the number of workers who are working in the

sphere, which is the increase in the working population that points to that sphere, that is available for that sphere is the cause of the low wages. And so he is going to summarize it by saying that what is a local oscillation in the labor market, political economy takes as if it were a question of the distribution of the working population, of the general movement of the working population.

[…] What appears as another issue linked to this is workers' solidarity. If the sharpening of competition had already appeared, Marx is going to put it in: the workers are aware of the competition between them to sell labor power in the face of the existence of relative overpopulation and they try to organize — Marx is going to put it through unions — a relationship of solidarity, of cooperation between the workers in activity and the workers who are surplus for capital. he says, to attenuate these consequences of what is the natural law of capitalist production. And immediately, the economists come out furiously to say that this violates the sacred law of supply and demand and that all solidarity between the unemployed and the working workers must be prohibited.

And the last observation that I wanted to make in this part is, Marx also makes a reference to the fact that with the development of the colonies, the metropolis may be losing the working population, reducing the industrial reserve army, and then, after making the reference to the free play of the law of supply and demand, The economists themselves justify, rebel against the sacred law of supply and demand, and want to correct it by applying violent resources.

Now comes the part of the form of the surplus working population, but, before we get into that, is there anything? As can be seen, the discourse of economists has not changed much in the 150 years since the publication of *Capital*: it is still exactly the same type of approach and the same recourse to violence when there is solidarity between employed and unemployed workers.

Edgardo: Juan, could you elaborate a little on how economists explain the existence of this industrial reserve army today?

JIC: You take me to a terrain that I haven't traveled for a long time, because I stopped teaching... But the point is this: in neoclassical economics, unemployment is always "voluntary", there is no such thing as involuntary unemployment: the worker who is unemployed... Well, I have to go to the whole development: every individual has a function of total utility, he wants to maximize his total well-being, subject to the diminishing marginal utility of the different "commodities" in the terms of this approach (of the different use values).

And what appears in neoclassical economics is that every individual, when he is born, does not come with a loaf of bread under his arm, but he comes with a good that is *leisure* (it is to be lying belly up, as we say here), but that this good does not satisfy all his needs. Since he has a lot of leisure and has no other commodities, by a misfortune of nature, because that is so, if he had commodities that allowed him to wait to consume, then he could have the interest to live, but since he has nothing but his leisure, he has to sacrifice a part of that leisure in exchange for obtaining commodities. So, work for neoclassical economics is a sacrifice of leisure, it is not

an activity; To the point that, in the graphs made by neoclassical economics that represent the utility functions of the individual, work is counted not from the origin to the right, but from the total leisure to the left: it is a sacrifice of leisure, it is not activity. So, since the individual needs to eat and has 24 hours of leisure, the marginal utility of leisure is relatively low compared to the income he can have working. And the equilibrium point, then, of the individual, is to sacrifice a certain amount of leisure in exchange for a certain amount of income where, if I remember correctly, the leisure available in terms of income and the income available in terms of leisure have been equalized. And that's the break-even point, the point at which the individual maximized his total utility.

So, when there is an individual who is unemployed, neoclassical economics says that it is an individual who has placed his or her total well-being optimum at the point where he or she has 24 hours of leisure and has no income. They summarize this by saying that there is no such thing as involuntary unemployment: every individual who is unemployed is because when he compared income with leisure, the utility offered by income with the utility offered by leisure, he chose to keep all leisure. This is then reflected in the vulgar consciousness, because it is the image of: here the one who is unemployed is because he does not want to work. That is strictly what neoclassical economics says: he is unemployed because he does not want to work, he prefers to maximize his leisure and not have to work. And then neoclassical economics shows a situation, let's call it "impurity" in this regard, in which, it says, there are individuals who don't have a job, are willing to work for a lower wage than there is, but the unions don't let it go down. And then, there is involuntary unemployment that is the fault of the unions. So the existence of unemployment is either an individual decision of the worker, or it is a collective decision through the union...

Randy: Sure, it's an "imposition." [**JIC:** Exactly.]

JIC: ... that does not let the salary fall enough to increase the demand for labor and this individual finds employment. So, unemployment is always the responsibility of the workers.

In Argentina (we have already continued to live it, but we are going to live it again I think intensely), during convertibility, in the 90s, all the laws of labor flexibility had this foundation: there are individuals who are willing to work, but wages must be lowered and the unions do not let them, so these obstacles to wage reductions must be eliminated. It is notable that with the fall in wages, unemployment increased enormously and unemployment rates were close to 25% and underemployment, but that was the official discourse.

With regard to the Austrian economy, which basically has the same foundations, they swear and perjure that they do not, but the value is given by utility and scarcity. The difference is that they say: it is not a problem of rationality, it is a problem of decisions, so the individual who is unemployed is because he has decided to be unemployed and is also choosing unemployment. The presence of the unions – it will also appear there, in that discourse – hinders the reduction of

wages that would allow the supply of labour to increase. Basically it is this proposal.

Neoclassical economics has everything... What was the main manual of microeconomics that was used for many years has now fallen more into disuse, but it was in the manual. He argued that unemployment insurance decreases the well-being of society because there is an individual who is going to have an income that is less than the salary he could have if he worked a normal working day, *but* he has an income *and also* kept all the leisure. And that individual then improved his total well-being, but since from somewhere he had to take what was given to him as income, which he did not participate in the production, the well-being of another subject decreased. And according to Pareto's definition of what is the optimum of social well-being, no one can increase their total well-being without decreasing the total well-being of another individual. So, what appears there is, in the manual in world use at that time, which was widely disseminated worldwide, it openly explained why, according to neoclassical economics, unemployment insurance undermined the well-being of society. I don't know, Edgardo, if with this more or less...

Edgardo: Yes, yes, excellent. I also said it because recently I was reading a text that I have written by economists or sociologists from the UBA, in fact, I think that "Seminar on Labor Studies" or something like that is called, but they were rather of the line of critical political economy and criticized the thesis that the high levels of unemployment that we have today in many countries was the product of the automation of the work, that today this topic is fashionable with these new artificial intelligences. Rather, they said that unemployment was the product of the lack of economic growth, and that then the economy, as it has not grown at a normal or suitable level, so to speak, is not in a position to absorb the entire economically active population. And well, here what Marx tells us is something very different: that even in times of prosperity, growth, the industrial reserve army is still necessary for the accumulation of capital.

JIC: Yes, yes. Do you have the name of any of the authors of that?

Edgardo: I can look up the text.

JIC: No, no. I suppose what can be linked to this, but what one has in front of you is, in the case of this situation in Argentina, the unemployment rate, the level that it has come to have in the best moments is relatively low, in the decade of the 1960-1970s, it oscillated between 4 or 5%. and now it oscillates at 8% in the good times of employment growth. What appears in this type of approach is not to look at the unity of determinations, because one would first have to explain why these national economies are growing slowly, what capital accumulation is clashing with, and one of the things that will appear is that, on the eve of acute crises, technical development is strongly accelerated.

So if these economies... I leave aside the economy such as Argentina and Latin America that have a whole different specificity, but if one looks at the European economies, [...] or the economy of the United States with low growth rates, also if

one compares them with the time of the 60s and 70s (they are much lower now), at that time there is an acceleration of the substitution of living labor for dead labor, when the crisis is very acute, even in a situation of relatively low wages. Because competition is so acute that the only way to outperform the competitor is to increase the productivity of labor. Therefore, to suppose that the movement of increasing the productivity of labor through the development of machinery has ceased to function, consequently, what pushes the multiplication of the surplus working population, is to make an abstraction. Especially when one looks at it in countries that have an extremely low rate of natural population growth, and then it is not that because capital does not grow and the working population grows, the surplus working population multiplies. That is why, again, I differentiate it with respect to the countries of Latin America, where, I put it simply, where capital is not simply valorized on the basis of the extraction of surplus value under normal conditions, being at the forefront of the development of the productive forces, but are national spaces of capital accumulation where capital is freed from the need to develop the productive forces on the basis of the superexploitation of capital. labor power and the appropriation of land rent (but that is simply stated). Edgardo, I don't know if...

Edgardo: All right.

JIC: Does anyone else want to raise something? If not, then we go to the forms of the surplus working population or relative overpopulation of workers.

4. Various forms of existence of relative overpopulation. The general law of capitalist accumulation.

Marx is going to start by proposing a situation that refers to the development of large-scale industry (he is going to look specifically at the centers of large-scale industry), and first he is going to have a general reference which is that every worker becomes a member of the surplus working population while he is unemployed or when he does not work a normal working day. The surplus working population, from the statistical point of view – in what we are looking at so far now, we will see that it extends much more later – the sum of the unemployment rate plus the underemployment rate, that is the measure of what immediately appears as "relative overpopulation". I already said, I think last time, and I say it again, we saw it before: when the unemployment rate fell below 4%, economists said that there was a lack of labor power, when in reality there was a surplus of 3% of the labor force, but that surplus was not enough for the needs of capital.

So, you're going to start looking first at what's going on in the big industry. And he says: in large-scale industry, with its movements of technical development and cyclical movements, what it does is to permanently displace masses of workers by taking them out of production, and moments in which it adds masses of workers to production, but it makes reference to the fact that this sum of masses of workers is in a decreasing proportion to what is happening with the scale of production. So he is going to refer to these workers who are in the movement of capital, they are entering and leaving production, as a floating overpopulation, which exists in a floating way. It is always there as a normal condition of the movement of capital, sometimes it grows, sometimes it decreases, but the individual worker enters and leaves this condition.

He is going to make a reference to a condition that is typical of Marx's time and that I have seen work in some Argentine industry, which is supposed to have been restricted and that now can also appear expanded. He states that large-scale industry needs a mass of young workers, and he posits it as a mass of male workers who are not yet young, but are minors, and that when they reach the age of the fullness of the development of their labor power, Marx is going to propose that only a very small part of these minors, When they reach adulthood, they get work and join this industrial reserve army, they become part of the fluctuating or floating workers' overpopulation. It is assumed that with the prohibitions of child labor, the restrictions on child labor where these conditions effectively prevail, that mass of workers who have not yet reached the fullness of physical development, does not appear, does not arise. When we talked about child labor, I referred to a study from 20 years ago (so we would have to see what happens today), but in the United States, they began to talk about child labor in 18-year-olds because it was considered that primary and secondary school was not enough to develop the normal productive attributes demanded by capital.

[...] Then, the other development that Marx makes is: at the other end of the working population, the deterioration in the reproduction of labor power due to the conditions, the intensity of labor, which degrades the worker's labor power

very quickly, and then, he proposes that a worker in the Middle Ages is already in decline. And then he is demoted in category, he is sent to the supernumerary workers, and he is going to make the observation that the workers of large-scale industry are the ones who have the shortest life. This also undergoes a series of transformations with the development of the technical conditions of production. We had already seen: there is a historical moment in which life expectancy at birth in England was 30 years and it is being extended. But what is certain is that, as the natural life of the worker is extended and his useful life is extended, those who are at the end of that useful life suffer these consequences that appear here of downgrading, of loss of productive attributes even though they remain active.

Well, and here there is also going to be an observation that makes the historical moment – even somewhat before the historical moment – to which Marx is, the very moment of Marx's life, which is: since there is a rapid wear and tear of the workers in the production process and a degradation, their life is short and replacements have to be multiplied, And that implies a rapid birth rate for the working population, a high birth rate for the working population. And Marx is going to propose that this is a law that governs the biological reproduction of the working population, which is only proper to the working population, and that this is accompanied by early marriages and the exploitation of the children of the working family that procreation puts at the disposal of capital. Then we will see what other forms this is taking. In general, population censuses, indeed... Let's consider it later, but life expectancy at birth in general for the working population that does the simplest work, that sells its labor power in more precarious conditions, with fewer productive attributes, this is still present, it is the one with the shortest natural life, but the birth rates of the working population in general have historically tended to fall very sharply.

So, when we have been advancing in these forms, these modalities that the working population has up to now, the formation of the surplus working population appears, the passage through the condition of surplus, it appears simply as a circumstantial movement, in the sense that the worker enters and leaves this condition of surplus (beyond all the concrete forms that we were just looking at). But the next step that Marx is going to take... Presented in this way, it seems that well, you come and go, there would be more and more, because there is the progressive character of the formation of that surplus working population, but simply what you have is a circumstantial situation. Where the next step is going to be taken, where a movement is evident where it is no longer simply that one enters and leaves according to the ups and downs of large industry in this situation, is when one is going to look at what is happening to the working population in the countryside, in agricultural production. Marx is going to look at it in agricultural production, but in reality it extends to any production process where the productivity of labor is subject to natural conditions that are not controllable by capital, it cannot control them by having their commodities a value that is not above the value they have when it is subjected to the productivity of labor to these natural conditionings (I don't know if this was understood). and that this is typical of agricultural production, mining production, fishing production; Today it is also linked as a notable feature in tourist production, where production has to be located in a specific space where those natural conditions to which the productive

capacity of work is subordinated are present and only that production in which the worker is applying his labor power is located in that space.

And so, what is going to happen with this working population is that, when it is displaced from the production process, either this happens in its own direct production process (it is replaced by machinery), or because in another place where this same type of commodity is produced, an increase in the productivity of labor has developed that leaves this first space out of production, Now, when the worker is expelled from production, in order to find a new buyer for his labor power, he has to move, he has to leave that space, because in that space the only production that exists is that in which he was already applying his labor power and now there is too much, he has to leave that space and go look for another place in which capital shows that it has need of that workforce. And then what is going to happen is that, unlike what happens with the workers in the urban centers or the workers in industry, the agricultural worker who has been displaced from production remains a latent labor force at the disposal of capital until capital demands that labor power from another place. Here it is not a situation of entering and leaving according to the ups and downs of production, according to the circumstances of the different branches and the circumstances of technical change, but it is a situation that is going to extend over time. And this is what Marx is going to call a latent surplus population: it is at the disposal of capital, but it remains in its place of origin, where it was selling its labor power, until capital attracts that labor power to another place. That is, to put it in immediate and simple terms, rural-urban migration is the manifestation of the movement of the surplus population.

Now, I always found it interesting to go beyond the development that Marx is proposing here and look at two things: to look at concrete manifestations of the movement of this latent surplus population (I know in the case of Argentina), and the second thing is to look at another source of latent surplus population that remains in that state of latency even more than those who were the rural workers; and that other part is what will constitute that latent surplus population are the independent producers, producers of commodities, the figure of the peasant, even owner of his land: direct producer with family labor power, small capitalist with salaried labor power, but especially what appears in the cases of family labor power, where as machinery is incorporated into the processes of agricultural production, where there was work for all the members of that family of independent producers of commodities, there is work left for fewer and fewer individuals. But since many of these cases have housing in the production space itself, they have the possibility of growing crops for subsistence, and this applies to the entire latent surplus population: since they come from a space in which there is only one production, we saw that the educational process, the more the educational process advanced, more universal individuals were produced. When a worker has... and this is a condition in the production of the workers of large-scale industry with the development of machinery, so that they could change branches and change machines with a certain flexibility because of the speed with which technical change takes place. On the other hand, in agrarian production, what appears is a single production, made in the forms that this worker or this direct producer had been doing. The place of general demand for this labor force is the

urban centers, that worker or direct producer displaced from agricultural production, in the urban center does not have any of the attributes that are needed for industry; it does not even have the management of the immediate conditions of life within that sphere, so that ceasing to be in the latent surplus population requires that the demand for capital or the desperate situation have become very acute. But we are going to look at the desperate situation later.

So, while that independent producer or producer with family labor power, even small capitalist, begins to stretch the possibilities of his subsistence in the place, he does not replace the value of the machinery that is in the... the income he has is no longer enough to replace the machinery he used, he is eating the machinery; it is not even enough to obtain an equivalent wage, because there is no demand for its labor power in that place, it subsists in the place and constitutes a mass of the latent surplus population. And excuse me, Alejandro, I complete this. In the case of Argentina, there is an example that is very marked and that I raise as a general issue. In 1936 an agrarian census was carried out and there was an enormous amount of family work, and this led many researchers on the subject to suggest that what was said about the agricultural production of the Argentine Pampas region, in particular the province of Buenos Aires, about the estancias with salaried workers, was not true because there was a predominance of family work. In 1947 a general population census was carried out and that population that appeared in 1936 disappeared, and that population that lived near Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Córdoba, close to what were developing as industrial centers, is the first to flow to those industrial centers. That's where Marx says: the expansion of industrial production attracts them, and those who were the closest to them, become the working population, in activity, in the industrial centers that are expanding. Then I would like to look at some of the aspects of this, but Alejandro, you wanted to raise something.

Alejandro: Yes, well, more than anything else also to generate a dynamic, which is not only your exhibition. But I find interesting the last thing you mention, which perhaps is not developed in *Capital* so clearly, on these forms of the surplus, latent working population, in particular the peasantry, what appears as peasantry or rural workers, which is this particular component that leads them to stay longer, perhaps, which is the house, let's say, that is located on that rural land. It seems to me that, although as far as I know it is not in Capital, it is developed more by Engels, it seems to me, in what is the *Contribution to the Housing Problem*. There is even an ideological role, I think, in the fact that this thing of housing in the possession of what appears as "peasant" is presented. All the proposals of the Proudhonians, and at that time all the anarchist civilians, go towards that point, like that idealized regression towards that way of life in the countryside, let's say.

JIC: Yes. There is a deterioration, and what there is in the case of the anarchists is a demand that this deterioration stop. But rural-urban migration is a universal phenomenon, with the development of large-scale industry and the development of agrarian capital, indeed. A few years ago there was a study in Argentina, made on the agrarian northeast of Argentina, where there were a series of productions (yerba mate, tobacco, tea...), a lot of family work in small productions, and those who did the study found that each of these family units, if they computed a salary

for those who worked, that salary exceeded what was the income of the family nucleus. If they computed the wear and tear of the machinery, that wear and tear exceeded what was the family income. With this, it was clear that they were overwearing the machinery and not even getting the equivalent of a salary for their direct work. However, they remained in production. Today they have other forms that are even more deteriorated, because they can no longer even remain in production and can only be sustained through plans given by the state, assistance plans, but we will also see that later. And normally what happened with these producers was that, when they could no longer even replace what is the equivalent of the constant capital that is consumed in raw materials, so to speak, they only left production there. So we have this form of latent surplus population.

For practically the mass of the Argentine working population *in the urban centers* – I always emphasize this – the origin of this mass of urban population is in two sources of latent surplus population. Because one part (who does not remember that this is their origin) is a descendant of the peasant population of Italy, Spain, the Middle East, displaced from production in their places of origin and absorbed by capital in Argentina, and the other part is a descendant or first generation of internal migrants of the native population. So, well, this is the almost universal origin of the working population of the urban centers of Argentina.

Alejandro [Chat]: From tsarist Russia.

JIC: From tsarist Russia as well. That's right. […] This extends to mining production, because also when mining in one place is exhausted, that working population, in order to find a buyer for its labor force, has to move to another geographical space. Do you want to say more about this latent surplus population?

I make a clarification about the translation of Fondo de Cultura Económica, at least the old translation, where it says: "[...] As we see, this source of relative overpopulation floats constantly,"[317] and what he has to say is "it is constantly flowing."

Edgardo: In the Siglo XXI it is as "flowing".

Alejandro: It is possible to confuse it with the other form previously seen, right?, of surplus working population.

JIC: Exactly, it is the term that is mistranslated.

Marx is going to draw another development from this, which is: with this condition of relative overpopulation that is retained in the place of origin where it is surplus, rural wages are constantly low (to make the reference that it is constantly reduced to the minimum wage), and that it is always on the verge of pauperism (and now it will appear later). So, indeed, when one compares urban and rural wages, rural wages, beyond the complexity of work, the development of productive attributes, the consumption of use values that are essential in the urban

[317] Marx, K. (1977: 544), Capital, *Volume 1*. Mexico City: FCE.

center, which in the rural center can be relative (because the worker may live in the same establishment where he works and therefore has no transportation expenses), But rural wages are universally markedly lower than urban wages even today, and so are precarious working conditions. Now, if a worker appeared here who went in and out of the condition... Edgardo, yes.

Edgardo: I had a concern, because you said that this latent relative overpopulation, in general, does not have the productive attributes that are going to be required in the urban center and that even this generates a kind of culture shock, or I don't know how to say it, a situation of desperation, it is not even used to urban life. But, I don't know, I see it with what happened, for example, in Southeast Asia, I mean, I'm going to a pretty specific way... This may be a mistake, but with the New International Division of Labor, or in the same case here in Mexico, that capital migrated to those places because precisely the latent surplus working population had the productive attributes for large-scale industrial processes. But I don't know if you were referring to a different historical period, I don't know if there is a latent surplus working class that does have the productive attributes, while others do not, which can be more easily absorbed by industrial production.

JIC: With this: [...] one always has to put it in relation to the concrete conditions under which labor power is demanded. But I take it in the process, for example, of Argentina – and I suppose it has been the Mexican historical process before the maquiladora industry – the individual, migration had... When I say this about the lack of productive attributes, it is an individual who arrives from the countryside to the city and who never... I am going to put it in these terms: he never traveled on an urban means of transport. We also have to consider historical periods and so on. When these cases appear, when one says "the peasants of East Asia", it is a society where it is not simply that they incorporate an urban center on an individual basis: it is a population that is accustomed to work with discipline, with centralized organization, because it comes from production under irrigation. Now: among the things that change substantially, is precisely that this is a population that lived by feeding itself with a bowl of rice per day, and when it has to begin to develop the intensity of work and begin to become an industrial worker, it begins with a 14-16 hour workday, and then the reproduction of that labor force requires a whole series of transformations in what that individual consumes. in the condition in which he is working. So, capital can take it, but why is that labor force massively going to look for it in East Asia and not looking for it in Latin America (because originally it does not come to look for it in Latin America)? Why don't you go look for it in Africa?

You find a labor force of these peasants under irrigation, with strongly structured societies, which serve for that very simple work, which does not require the development of productive attributes, and which requires disciplined individuals to do that work. Then, it cannot continue to reproduce them with these attributes, it begins to reproduce them with other attributes, and what capital does is to leave that place for which the workers were useful simply to arrive from their latent condition, it takes it to other national spaces. So, it is in this sense that he is a worker who, until this capital appears and absorbs it, is in the latent situation; and

the peasants of East Asia were in this situation of latent surplus population, which has been generated and multiplied very strongly, at the same time that in Europe and in the United States the image appeared that there was no more surplus working population, that mass of surplus working population is being generated in this other place, and capital goes looking for it, because it has those attributes that serve it. But, until then, capital did not go looking for it, due to the technical changes that had taken place.

Well, today it seems that I have to name Nicolás Grinberg several times, because I named him in the other workshop. Nicolás Grinberg had made a study of how the technique had changed from riveting to welding, but within welding, which had allowed the production of ships to be taken from Europe to Korea; It is mediated by the simplification of this labor process: it is not the same welding worker that the Polish, Norwegian and other workers had, they did not apply the same welding technique as the Korean worker who joins production. So, it is capital that changed the possibility, changed the basis by which that worker, who until now was a latent surplus population, would serve him for his valorization process better than the old welding worker – to take this example – who was much more expensive to reproduce. So, there's this.

Edgardo: Yes, what I want to point out there is that, if the flow specifically of this surplus working class figure, that is, the latent one, also depends to a certain extent on the productive attributes of that same latent working class. That is, because in order for it to be absorbed by the productive processes of an urban center, it has to have at least some productive attribute that can be useful to it, obviously mediated by all these processes of simplification of work, etc.

JIC: Therefore, it has to have some productive attribute, but it can have productive attributes that are substantially more favorable or that are very unfavorable and that it is very difficult for it to transform from an agricultural worker into an industrial worker. If capital attracts it, it must always have some productive attribute, because if capital would not serve it, capital would look elsewhere for that labor power. I think that in the case of Mexico (I don't know, you're going to know it much better than I do), what plays out there (where I suppose there were no workers so disciplined, although I don't know the Mexican peasant population, to what extent the character of this disciplined structure could have), but there what plays is the proximity to the United States: the possibility of having the worker who does the most complex work of all very close to the worker who does the most simplified work of all, and the mediation that one and the other are separated by a state, each one has its national state, then in some way the reproduction of one and the other as markedly different is favored.

Edgardo: Yes, through citizenship their conditions of reproduction are more easily differentiated, right?

JIC: I'm tempted to give an example with one thing, but... There is an old tango, from the beginning of the twentieth century, where contemptuously... because it is not the criticism of the rural individual, but of another urban individual who is being disqualified, and the lyrics of the tango say: "Andás por el centro...", which is

the center of the city, "... made a *straw man*". And the term "pajuerano" comes from the rural way of speaking: I am of "pajuera", instead of "outside". So, to be a pajuerano is to be an individual who comes from outside the city and who does not know how to behave in the city. This appears to me, but this is absolutely irrelevant. I don't know if you wanted to propose something else, Edgardo, or if not, Alejandro wanted to propose something.

Edgardo: No, not for me anymore, thank you.

JIC: Well, now we have not yet reached all the forms of the surplus working population, so here is a reference to a situation that has not yet appeared. Because what is going to appear is: if this population was in the situation of surplus for longer, what characterized it was that it was in that latent state until capital demanded it elsewhere, what is going to appear now is: such is the degree of surplus that has been generated from the point of view of capital that the possibility that capital has is to dispose of the power of labor that is bought below its value. And so, what is going to appear here is this third category of relative overpopulation, which back in the Fondo de Cultura is translated as "intermittent," and it is not intermittent, it is *stagnant*. Because he is a worker who is part of the active workers' army, but at the same time he is selling his labor power under conditions that are not the normal ones for the reproduction of that labor power. It is selling its labor power in what are commonly called "precarious conditions." And so, we find a worker who is selling his labor power because he is a member of the surplus labor population. If capital had to buy his labor power by paying the value of that labor power, that worker for capital has more than enough; but if he can buy it below its value, then it does serve to incorporate it as an active labor force. And then, it reproduces itself as labor power in activity on the basis of being surplus for capital. Did anyone want to raise something?

Alejandro: Yes, Juan. Let's say, in this form of surplus working population it would not be so easy to visualize with immediate statistical data, right?

JIC: No, the reference that appears... Because in part it may be in the underemployed population, but it is not in the unemployed. There we must look for it in the relationship between wages and the normal conditions of reproduction of labor power. This means the value of labor power. If the working day extends beyond what is normal... There is an indicator that is not seen as this, but that somehow, historically, when you had a... There is this, I take it from Argentine history: at one time, the basket to measure the cost of living index, more strictly consumer prices, was what was called a "normative basket". And that normative basket said: well, the typical family, father, mother and two minor children, needs to consume so much bread, so much meat, etc. From the multiplication of the surplus working population in Argentina, and the fall in the real wage, which reflects the sale to the labor force increasingly below value, the criterion was inverted and what was the typical consumption of someone who had been deteriorating was taken into account, what his typical consumption was because he no longer had enough to buy.

Another indicator that one can say, I am going to associate it with this normal condition of selling to the labor force, is the reference to "unsatisfied basic needs", because it is called "unsatisfied basic needs" for a reason, it is saying: this is the minimum condition that corresponds to a normal life process, and this minimum condition is not present. Well, then it means that this is an individual who is selling his labor power below value.

And then there is another series of expressions in which one can recognize the sale of labor power below its value. The deterioration of educational processes, of access to education, is also an expression of stagnant surplus population growth. In Argentina we have a situation that may seem curious to non-Argentines, but of the University of Buenos Aires, which is the largest university in Argentina (I don't remember how many, more than 100,000 students it has), half of the faculty — I suppose it must be even worse now — have no salary. We work (because I am included in that part), in what is called *ad honorem*, for the honor of being university professors, and the proposal that is made is: in reality one pays to work, because to go to work one has to pay for the bus, one has to dress, one has to eat, so the worker is paying to work. Well, that condition (when I studied at that university, there were no *ad honorem* professors) says that the faculty is made up of members of the surplus population stagnant, massively, it is half of the professors. When one looks at the evolution of the salary (and I learned this recently at a union meeting), the salary of a university professor in the 1970s was equated with that of a federal judge (these are the judges that correspond to the national state). I am a full professor and I am *ad honorem*, and judges earn many times more than any paid full professor. So, that says that this part of the working population in Argentina became surplus for capital.

But I always make one more observation, which is that it is part of the stagnant surplus population. It is also a peculiarity of capital accumulation in Argentina that public universities, access to the public university, to the degree, but that it is a degree that lasts five or six years, and that is a specialization in some subject, is free. What is happening to the mass of students at the University of Buenos Aires and in general at the public universities of Argentina? That they are already selling their labor power, and not accessory sellers of labor power, but that they have a full working day and then they have the day as students. What is this showing? That this is a stagnant surplus population. If capital had to grant them scholarships so that they would not be selling their labor power, capital does not need the labor power of those students. But at the same time, when one looks at teachers in this situation, one has another expression, not only that teachers are surplus working population, but that students are surplus working population. If capital could not produce this future labour power for free, then it does not need that labour power. If you didn't have half of the faculty without a salary, then you wouldn't be able to have, if you took that half out, you wouldn't be able to have the number of students that you have. With which, he is saying that this is stagnant surplus population.

These are the scope of the stagnant surplus population. I took it in labor processes that appear as complex work, as production processes of a labor force with developed productive attributes and so on, and it is markedly so. When one looks at the evolution of the average wage in the Argentine economy, the real wage,

what you have is that the average real wage, comparing now (which is a now that it is coming many years ago) with the average real wage of the year 73-74, is, if I remember correctly, something like 40%. Well, a real wage that went from 100% to 40%, what it says is that there is a multiplication of the stagnant surplus population. At this moment, in Argentina, workers registered in blank with all the legal working conditions are below the poverty line: that says that it is stagnant surplus population, and that then, the accumulation of capital in Argentina is sustained by the stagnant surplus population.

[…] Okay. It would be interesting, not today, but next time, if we could take this up again, with respect to Spain, Mexico, Colombia...

Edgardo: With respect to the conditions of...?

JIC: From the stagnant surplus population.

Edgardo: But not specifically of university education workers.

JIC: No, no. We look at those with envy from here.

Edgardo: Because the UNAM, which is the closest thing to the UBA, most of the professors have a salary below the minimum wage, but there is no such figure of ad *honorem professors*. Everyone receives at least for the ticket [Laughter].

JIC: They don't pay to work [Laughs].

Edgardo: I think so, because they have to pay for food...

JIC: Not that part, a salary so minimal that it is only enough for transportation.

Edgardo: Yes, yes, literally.

JIC: Yes, we always look at them with envy, that's clear [laughs]. I suppose that in European universities and in North American universities, in the United States, there has been a deterioration in the conditions of sale of the labor force that is far from what I am proposing here, but that compared to the 70s, the conditions of sale of the labor force of the university centers seem to me to be, in general, with more stability of position, less what we call here "simple dedications". A university professor is supposed to do research, in some faculties this is not the case, but in the faculties of economic sciences, the bulk of the professors have simple dedication: to teach and nothing else. In faculties of social sciences I believe that there is also a very great weight. From a study they did once in economics, there were, I think, 1% of full-time teachers and 2% of semi-full-time teachers. All the rest with simple dedication, and in that rest they included all the *registered ad honorem* (because there are also a number of *ad honorem* who are not even recognized by the university).

Edgardo: But yes, it's interesting to see.

JIC: There are other aspects that too, but when we look at where else this movement continues, I also think it is interesting to look at other aspects of what has happened with education, as a reflection of the non-reproduction of a workforce under normal conditions.

[II]

JIC: Well, first, if there is anything from the past time that you want to raise.

Edgardo: I think last time, Juan, you said something like we were going to make a kind of comparison between Argentina and other countries in the region, but I don't know if I misunderstood you.

JIC: Yes, but when we complete the development of the forms of relative worker overpopulation. And I would like to expand on some of the determinations that appear from these transformations, and then, if what we had said was to look at manifestations of this, one of those manifestations is what happens to education while capital needs labor power and when it no longer needs that labor power. But first we have to look at the forms that development is taking and we reach the surplus population stagnant in the condition of surplus and well, from there we had to continue in several aspects. [...]

Iván: I, Juan, sorry, I have a query that was itching me from the other meeting. It is a question that is more "methodological, so to speak, which consists of how we distinguish between the active worker, who is not part of the surplus working population, and the active worker as well, but who is part of the surplus working population in a stagnant condition. Because what I see is that there is a point where what capital does is, incorporates technology, simplifies labor processes, manages in this way to empty or lower the qualities it requires from the labor force, and therefore expels qualified workers and takes unskilled or less qualified workers and buys their labor power below its value. So, that is an active worker, but one who sells labor power below its value, and it is a little difficult in those cases to be able to discern, or at least it is for me, between whether it is a stagnant surplus working population, or it is an active worker who... That is, [...] how do we differentiate a worker who is selling labor power below its value and a surplus worker in a stagnant condition? [...] I don't know if those two towns are the same. That is, there is a point where they intersect, but they are not necessarily the same.

And something else to add to this question is also distinguishing the fact that this stagnant surplus working population is not always (as Marx maintains in those paragraphs) in declining industries. Like sometimes it is, for example, in labor informality and so on, or jobs that the productive units are in the hands of informal bourgeoisie including, I don't know, textile workshops and so on, but that is also in advanced industries, perhaps not the most advanced, but it can appear as for example in platform workers, that is, where the platforms make an advance and incorporate this population, or when we see the development in Southeast Asia, where capital migrates and incorporates, in that case, surplus population...

Edgardo [Chat]: Also in the maquilas.

Iván: Well, there Edgardo comments on the maquilas; I was thinking of the examples of Southeast Asia where there is a latent surplus population, but one looks at the salary comparison with the North American worker and says: well, is it an active worker who is paid the labor power below its value or is it a surplus labor population? [...].

JIC: Well, the proposal you make is clear. As a result of that, I would like to order, to propose some things. In the first place, capital always needs workers who sell labor power under normal conditions, beyond the fact that according to the moments in this that we saw [...] of the ten-year cycle and of the more acute cyclical movements, even longer than the ten-year, the movement is going to be: in the moments of boom wages will tend to rise and in the moments of depression, Even for workers who would normally sell labor power below value, there may be a blow to that normality. But one looks at it in the general movement and they tend to reproduce their labor power under normal conditions with the normal attributes that are needed to put that labor force into operation, and even how the very development of an increasing complexity in labor through the development especially of intellectual, intellectual work does not mean basic science, but in general, I am not taking it in that sense, but... How capital is requiring workers with productive attributes that imply greater consumption of use values and not necessarily an increase in the value of labor power, on the contrary, the value of labor power is falling with the increase in labor productivity, but we saw the shortening of the working day linked to the increase in labor intensity, which implies the need to consume, let's call it in very simple terms, more use values. So, when one looks at the surplus working population, the image may appear that in reality the entire working population becomes surplus for capital, stagnant, or then we are going to see what else happens to it. Capital always needs certain productive attributes that it needs to be reproduced, and if the production process makes it necessary to develop those productive attributes, then what is going to appear is in the value of the labor power of a generation, the production of a generation with more developed productive capacities will appear.

The second point is that when we are talking about labor power, what appears is that in the movement of the private character of labor there arises the division of national spaces and a world unity that is not yet, let's call it, a world uniformity in general. [...] What I was saying is this[318]: there is national fragmentation of the process of capital accumulation, there are national specificities, there are *national histories*, that when one looks at what the determination of the value of labor power is, the consumption of use values can be different, and what for a working population would be below the value of labor power, for another working population it may be that this is the value of labor power. Now: there are no differences either, in terms of material similarity of work, then there are no such great differences, or that the concrete historical conditions of a working class are projected decades and decades. A mediation of these historical conditions may

[318] There was a small outage due to network problems.

appear, but in the long run producing a worker who is more or less equal to the other, ends up costing more or less the same as the other.

The examples... I think we have already talked about this somewhat. So, when one looks at the phenomenon that you were proposing, Iván, of the taking of capital to East Asia, it is clear that when you begin to incorporate that labor force, which is extremely cheap, it is in a cheapness that corresponds to its condition as a previous surplus working population, latent surplus population, but that when a working day of 14-16 hours is imposed on it, 6 days a week, with costs of living that correspond to an urban center, that labor power quickly ceases to be able to reproduce on the basis of what could keep it in a position to enter this production process before. I think that last time we talked about this. And what is beginning to appear is that it is beginning to be imposed: shortening of the working day, a rise in wages, the development of education – at least for the workers who can no longer reproduce immediately under the previous conditions. And if within the national territory there is still more latent surplus population, what happens with that population is that it is attracted in the initial conditions of the other, but in the long run it undergoes that transformation.

This transformation is present in China, but China is beginning to have problems of having run out of latent surplus population, it is running out (at least, that's how it appears) that population, that source of labor force, and that is why part of that type of worker is now incorporated in India, in Pakistan, it is sought outside China. It is also possible that the general conditions of reproduction of labor power in China no longer allow for a sharp differentiation between the newly incorporated workers as industrial workers and those who are already there. Where one can see this most richly, so to speak, is the case with Japan, because Japan exhausted its latent surplus population. It comes from the 2nd World War selling itself for a poverty wage, and as it is transformed into an industrial worker population it can no longer be sustained with the poverty wage. Since it cannot be sustained with poverty wages... I don't know if the term is: you have to give it, or productions emerge that require a labor force with more productive attributes, and then the type of production that exists changes. Now... I think we talked about it last time, I told them something about Japan and basic science and that.

Edgardo: Yes, yes, we mentioned, we talked for a little while.

JIC: Well, the Japanese labor force continues to subsist in conditions that are not similar... The Japanese labor force that does the most complex work continues to reproduce in conditions that, one can say, are below the equivalent of the European or North American labor force that does the same type of work; housing conditions are more or less narrower, the working day is longer, the number of annual hours worked is still somewhat higher...

Fernando [Chat]: The average salary is also lower.

JIC: Well, here Fernando adds the salary. And he continues to have productive attributes that are not the same as those of the European worker who does complex work. With what I was telling you about: there is still a disciplinary

structure and the need for accountability that even becomes incompatible with the development of basic science and so on. So, one sees that 80 years have passed, and yet a certain differentiation remains.

I haven't done the math for several years, but unfortunately... To see what had happened to us in Argentina, where the image was: well, why does Korean industry compete with Argentine industry? Because now it has much lower salaries; Korea's industrial wages were, and I believe are now, markedly higher than Argentina's. I don't know if in purchasing power, but from the point of view of capital, which is how much world money it costs, how many dollars it costs. I told them about the Chinese economists when they go to the congresses (they show the graphs of how wages rise in China, they leave out what the starting point was), but I suppose that wages in China are already at levels for a certain type of worker that are not so low on European wages, an American salary.

So, the first thing is these conditions. That then one says: in this place, of course, this was to pay for the labor power compared to the European one well below value, but it was a labor force that was produced with that misery; then it cannot be reproduced with that misery, but since it carries conditions of having reproduced immediately with misery, this also extends over the time in which a worker with the same productive attributes is being produced...

Fernando [Chat]: The average PPA salary in Korea is very similar to the Japanese (65% of the Yankee) and the Chinese, the last thing I saw (2017), the average urban PPA salary was close to 40% of the Yankee.

JIC: ... drag that movement. So, it's not that I'm going to appeal to the index used by the World Bank to measure poverty in the world, which is a standard... but, strictly speaking, to differentiate whether it is selling for the value of labor power or not, you have to look at all these mediations. Now, if one takes the Argentine case, and if one takes the industrial wage of Argentina, to take a worker who more or less has the same attention, several questions arise. It is true that in Argentina the activity rate increases, and so in the working family there is an average of more sellers of labor power, which would imply some fall in the value of individual labor power. It can be discussed whether capital needs workers with fewer productive attributes in Argentina than it had before, considered workers who will pay for the value of labor power. But when one finds that around 1974 the purchasing power of the industrial worker's salary in Argentina was 60-70% of the equivalent industrial worker's salary in the United States and that today the industrial wage in Argentina is 50% of what it was in 1974, that there is no increase in the activity rate that is worthwhile, there is no simplification of work that is worthwhile—because they are also workers who have more or less the same productive attributes—there is a sale of labor power markedly below value.

So, the movement is more or less... It is not clear that one says: ah, but here this one sells the power of labor below value. I referred last time to the situation of university professors who never had the productive attributes of a sale to the labor force because of its value. That of industrial workers, when one compares it with industrial workers in the United States, did not have it in 1974 either. [...]When

one looks at Argentina at the beginning of the twentieth century, the purchasing power of wages is above that of Italy and Spain, and what one sees is processes of migration to Argentina. It was almost equivalent to that of the English worker, then it separates, separates, separates... When one looks at the situation of university professors, who consider that the value of the labor force includes the sabbatical, includes participating in congresses and so on, and includes having an exclusive dedication, that in Argentina, at least for many years, does not exist. So, it is a labor power that, when one looks at it, says: if this is the normal condition because this individual, this, and this, his productive attributes, and in the sale of his labor power there are none of the components, that says that he is selling his labor power below value.

When one looks at the population of university students who are sellers of labor power, they say: here there is a double wear and tear, they are not selling labor power for its value, because the salary covers them for the wear and tear they do working, but it does not cover the wear and tear they have because they are studying. So, if one compares with other national spaces where this is not universal, which has been deteriorating strongly, all these are indicators that it is not a situation of selling labor power for its value and that what happens is that the value of labor power has fallen, but that it is a situation of selling labor power sustainably below value.

And then, I always put a figure: you have to distinguish (pardon the local term) who is a kiosk by vocation and who is a kiosk because he has nowhere to sell his labor power. So, there is a stagnant surplus population that for the statistical record appears as self-employed, not as a worker, a seller of labor power. The cartoneros do not appear as sellers of labor power. The translation is that there is no ... in other countries there is not so much... A business that sells cigarettes, sweets... The window of the house that has the...

Edgardo: Oh yes, here it would be groceries.

JIC: Not even, I think, because it's not a store that sells food... He sells soft drinks and yogurts for consumption on the street, but you can't go there to stock up. I don't know if grocery stores are no longer a food store, cleaning things... these do not amount to that much. But I put it in a more serious situation: the cartoneros (who I think does not need translation), do not appear as sellers of labor power: they appear as self-employed workers. And no one is a cardboard collector by vocation.

Then, even that distortion appears in the statistics, which in Argentina had a historical expression, during the last dictatorship, when the unemployment rate began to rise (it never went back, but that's when it began to rise), many of the new unemployed still had severance pay. And then, many of those indemnities (the same thing that happened in the 90s, later) were applied to set up small shops, small workshops... They set up a kiosk. And then, in the official statistics, unemployment went down and the growth of self-employment began to appear, and one of the official discourses of the dictatorship, the statistical report when this was discussed, was that what happened is that we Argentines are like that: we

like to be independent, to be free, and so we prefer to be self-employed and not have a boss. We don't like to have a boss. And that was the argument that was given in the face of the increase in the surplus working population on the basis of a statistical record that this was a petty bourgeois, that he was not a worker. And when you look at that population, you may be very conscious of being petty bourgeois, but it is a member of the stagnant surplus working population. And in general, prices, the profit they have from their trade, whatever, with luck comes to be equivalent to a salary, and many times it is below the salary (which I also think we talked about last time, something like that).

So, it is very debatable... Not debatable, but it is very complex to look and say: ah, but this is no longer a salaried worker, now he is a self-employed (they are the most reactionary there is, but it is a stagnant surplus population).

Fernando [Chat]: There is a very clear movement in the pandemic. Self-employment rose and salaried workers fell. In fact, the rate of wage employment fell quite a bit and now it has risen again. I think it went to 71% and now it's close to 74% again. In times of crisis, self-employment rises and salaried employment falls.

JIC: But say it verbally, Fernando, interrupt me.

Fernando: It's just that I'm playing music in the background, if it doesn't bother me I'll say it. No, no, this, that we were looking at the EPH data on another day for the UNS class, and in the pandemic the rate of salaried employment went down and self-employment went up, and what you generally have is that movement, that in times of crisis self-employment goes up and salaried work goes down. It is a clear sign of this that you indicate that, in reality, they are salaried workers who— let's put it that way in terms of what a former president would say— *fall* into self-employment and not entrepreneurs.

JIC: Yes. But that president would say that on the contrary, they are "independent."

Fernando: Exactly. And what we did in the work of [?? – 33:55], one of the decisions to make households with a main salaried income had to do with this. Because in the household income you can have a salaried income and a self-employed income, but if the main one is salaried, what you have is nothing, that the other income is from the stagnant surplus working population, which does not even reach the salary and is doing another activity on its own to complement the income.

JIC: Yes, yes, he has a longer working day than he has as a salaried employee.

Fernando: Exactly. And when one takes and separates those households of salaried workers, let's put it like this, what you have is that since the eighties the income has fallen, and it is the moment in which this issue of the generalization of women as sellers of labor power expands. It is the same period of time that the working population increases, let's say that it effectively sells its labor power and

what we have is that if you take it for a home, it falls. What before, the income of a single individual perhaps, let's say, was higher than what is now the multiple incomes on average, right?

JIC: Well, then what you have is... Let's say, all these things mediate in the register, going back to what Iván had initially proposed. It has to be analyzed with all these determinations and many of them are not categorically separable, that you can say: well, here there is no doubt that there is this or there is no doubt that there is that. You have to analyze it with all these elements.

I emphasize it again: there is a question that it precisely highlights, which implies denying the determination of the value of commodities by the abstract socially necessary labor that is privately expended in producing them, and that is to suppose that "socially necessary" is supply and demand and that this is what governs the socially necessary. which is a whole line within Marxism that is in full expansion (the German "New Reading" has that proposal, Heinrich has that proposal). Because then labor power is always sold for its value: what happens is that solvent social need does not go any further, and then that is the value of that labor power. "Socially necessary" corresponds to normal conditions, and the surplus working population are not normal conditions for selling labor power, they are conditions for selling labor power below value. So well, this is in the way. I don't know if with this...

Iván: I mean, yes, but there is one point that I still lack, which is that of... That is, if we continue to link this to industries in decline, that is, or what link do we make there? Because one could also say, well, in the Chinese case, it's like a contradictory process, that is, where you had a latent working population, there is a migration of capital and so on, and a process begins, let's say, of universalization of that labor force. [38:48] In the Argentine case it would be the opposite case, that is, you started from a certain base and there is a descending process, let's say, both in that industry and in what is paid for that labor force.

But what I still have to do is what happens with, or how to understand this process where there are beginning to be platforms, new labor relations that have a characteristic that is global and that are used in productive processes that develop globally at the same time (all this form of platforms: Rappi, Glovo, PedidosYa, Uber...), but also programmers, graphic designers, that is, as a very wide range; And what they all have in common (because yes, you will find a high wage dispersion), let's say, is on the one hand that there is no recognition of the employment contract, and on the other hand, that in certain states that begin to regulate this labor force (and there is directly the case of delivery workers), What appears are laws that regulate the labor force but say: well, if you work less than, suppose, 30 hours a week or less than 16 hours a week, you are not recognized as a worker, you are recognized as a self-employed, and then you lose the total right to social security.

So, there is a differentiation there, that is, the law does not recognize that the worker requires that the total of his reproduction be covered, that the worker requires the totality of a social labor, or the retirement contribution, or

compensation in the event of an accident of occupational risk, for the time of an illness, to a fraction. So, at first I saw it and I said: well, for me this is stagnant surplus working population. But at the same time it is developing at a global level, in Europe, the United States, and on the other hand the state, which also appears as something quite particular, recognizes this differentiation in the legislation itself.

JIC: Two issues with this. One of the first is: the legal superstructure is the form that the economic base takes. The economic base generates a growing mass of surplus working population and labor legislation reflects this situation.

If one looks in Europe towards the 1960s and the early 1970s (in the United States as well but with racial discrimination in the United States always and migrants was always more visible, in Europe at that time migrations were more limited, there were always migrations within the different European countries, but they were more limited than what appears later) the discourse had appeared that Marx was wrong in what we have to complete of the "general law of capitalist accumulation", which is: at one pole the growth of wealth, and at the other pole the growth of misery. And it was said (one still hears it now, but now it is more difficult for those who propose it to appear): the movement of capitalism, capitalist development is what is going to lead to universal welfare. In Western Europe, in the United States, there is no more surplus population (that was the discourse), and if someone is out of work, then they have unemployment coverage that is almost equivalent to labor income, and unemployment rates are 4-5%, which is frictional in nature, in and out.

And so, that is the discourse that appears of economic development. Placed in countries like Argentina, it was: what is the reason for underdevelopment? That we have not yet been able to make enough progress, but when it is fully developed through industrial development and the rest, we are going to do the same as France. At that very moment, I was exploiting the latent overpopulation of workers in East Asia, because it was there... The rest of the world too, later we will look at the specific determinations, but I mean, in the rest of... In Asia, in Africa, in Latin America... But that was the speech.

The base of the accumulation changes, and... At that time they were the universal conditions for the reproduction of labor power. I know the case of an American Marxist economist who was a high school teacher, and with unemployment insurance he did his doctorate, which tells what magnitude and how long that unemployment insurance was. So, from the mid-1970s onwards that exploded and a strong differentiation began, and unemployment rates rose and rose very sharply in Europe, and the old industrial working population that is displaced from production by production in East Asia becomes the surplus working population, which is not in the unemployment rates because they are considered not in a position to work. it is an economically inactive population, it is not looking for work, so it does not appear in the unemployment rate. And then comes the very strong differentiation, and then the Uber appear and the Rappi appear, they appear in those countries as well, and what the legislation is going to reflect is that well, this is the normal condition now for the purchase and sale of labor power in this national space. And it is being reflected, and what they want to

do in Argentina to reform the labor legislation, which has already been reformed quite sustained, is that, is to reflect: this is all surplus working population, no severance pay, no education, no limitation of the working day: the total is surplus. It only serves capital on this basis; If it is surplus and you are going to have an 8-hour day, severance pay and you are going to have vacations, to that capital that is in... This is what Marx poses there: where does this population end up and is it what allows the surplus of large industry to survive? Well, Argentine industry is in its leftover unit of large industry, and in order to reproduce itself, it reproduces itself on this basis and, very openly, on the basis of so-called "unregistered" employment, which is simply a problem of state control structure and is not done, it is the practical way of reproducing capital on the basis of the use of stagnant labor power. in increasingly precarious conditions.

So, well, when they say that labor legislation in Argentina is backward and is 100 years old... Yes, of course: it was of the universal worker, it was the legislation that corresponded to a worker within a relatively undifferentiated national space. And there comes a phase where in addition, the surplus population that was, but it was relatively... "limited", and today it is the opposite. So the legislation... I make the clarification: all the working class has to do is fight to maintain that legislation, but what happens when one looks at it objectively is that it does not have the strength to be able to sustain the legislation of the undifferentiated worker. And among other things, it does not have the strength, not only in legislation, but to enable there to be 40% of unregistered employment.

And where the other transit of this that is in Argentina and that is seen is (it has sometimes cost me discussions because some person who saw me say this was outraged), but when [...] in the 80s there began to be plans for the unemployed (in the 90s this multiplied, and in the year 2000-2001 explodes), one of the intentions was that the unemployed worker, who was paid an unemployment plan, and that if a company hired him to work, he deducted the plan from the salary of the collective bargaining agreement. Then the state continued to pay the subsidy and the company hired the worker for the collective bargaining wage minus the subsidy. The CGT was strongly opposed to that (with everything that is the CGT) because it was: well, then from here on the companies no longer hire a worker who does not come with unemployment benefits because for the cost of the company the worker has a cheapener. Today the labor movement accepts that there is a subsidy and that the individual has a job and that, in fact, it is deducted from the salary. So, there are all the transformations that are showing a national economy that in the generation of stagnant surplus population, and we still need to see what happens with that stagnant surplus population and the deepening of this that Marx does not put as a fourth level, but I am going to present it as a fourth level, and where it is also very difficult to separate the limit; because to what extent is an individual whose job it is to recover from the garbage and eat from the garbage, is a worker stagnant in that condition, if the deterioration is not already ... transcends? Well, he sells labor power below value, he no longer even has a buyer for labor power, but he has something to sell, but if he eats what he has to sell, because he eats from the garbage, well, he is no longer a worker who is simply stuck in this condition. I don't know if this is more...

Iván: Yes, the last thing Juan, and forgive the rest of the comrades for the number of questions: what about the competition between capitalists in this scenario? [...] I think about it more at a global level, and particularly in relation to platforms: you have capitalists who continue to pay labor power at its value, perhaps in a simplified labor process, and at the same time a group of companies emerge, we said, with a lot of power in relation to the capital they have, the money they value, or at least to the global expansion that they are beginning to generate, but at the same time they employ their labor force systematically paying for it below value. And there, let's say, how does that competition develop? Because, let's say, in capitalism, that is, Marx thinks in chapter VIII he maintains: well, there is nothing that hates capitalists more than the unequal conditions of exploitation of labor power because they end up appearing as different powers at the moment of accumulation. Well, that would be the question.

JIC: Yes. There are two... I always have "two aspects", then there are a lot [Laughs]. But among capitalists there are contradictions, even according to the type of commodity that each one produces. That became very clear in the 90s, also in Argentina, when they privatized electricity services, public services, with fiercely high rates. Then one of the companies, I talked about it with someone who worked there, I don't know what it was here, but he was a manager in several branches of Coca-Cola and they were also faced with this: from the point of view of Coca-Cola, those rates were a disgrace, not because of what it cost them, but because they couldn't sell, because what they had to sell was destined for a population that did not have the means to pay them because they had to pay the increased rates. So, well, it's the forms of competition.

What you call the "platforms" does not convince me of this name, because the platform is an instrument, and the structure of operation uses the instrument, but it uses the surplus working population. The type of productive process they carry out lends itself to having workers who see themselves or who have to put up with themselves as self-employed, especially the most qualified. Now, those more qualified who work from Argentina making computer programs for other countries, in the other countries we have to see if they could live as they do in Argentina with a much lower salary. Why do these companies compete? Because the salary or labor cost in Argentina is much lower. Now, what if that worker had to go to work doing that same job in Germany, in this case? We have to see if it could reproduce its labor power as it reproduces it here, because here it is cheapened, because it compares it with a labor force that is very strongly cheapened. So, he sells it cheaply for the world market, but compared to the Argentine market it is a good salary.

And in addition, in programming work it lends itself to the fantasy of personal freedom and individual freedom. The Rappi too, but the Rappi is sadder, what personal freedom it gives you because you have to pedal all day like a desperate man. But the work of programming, graphic design even more, is: I'm a creative individual, that's why I get this job, what am I going to have a boss who is telling me "Hey, you made it to the schedule", "You didn't make it to the schedule"? Therefore, the coercion on this type of worker in companies is not that I am going to control your schedule, no: I am going to give you a room to rest if you are tired, I

am going to put some *pool tables* and games on you, and I am going to give you a delicious meal; now... Poor you, if you don't bring me the results fulfilled, because there you don't have a second of those conditions left. So, they are also forms of coercion that can work more in a certain type of production than in another type of production.

The fantasy that three-dimensional printers are going to replace industrial plants, may lead, to the extent that it has some... I think it's a fantasy, but for some productions it can have a place, it can be this same thing taken to small runs of very special things and I became a self-employed person who does this, it's this same situation. I say: there are self-employed who are not members of the surplus working population, I don't know what professions to name, I have to resort back to the national forms, but the *holders* of notary offices in Argentina are not part of the surplus working population, the *employees* of the notary office are part of the surplus working population. But that's a capitalist who has... The lawyer running for governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, that is not a member of the surplus working population, he is an independent seller of commodities, I suppose he is a capitalist of the legal profession, he must have salaried lawyers. That is not a surplus working population, their lawyers may be. The same goes for accounting studies and all this with the fantasy that "I made you a partner", then, since he is a partner in that company...

Then those other forms appear. This is entirely for domestic consumption [Laughter]: Pampita's husband, who owns several restaurants, is not a member of the surplus working population: he is a member of the petty bourgeoisie, yes, he is a petty capitalist. It is clear that your employees are members of the second-large-scale surplus working population, is it?

Iván: I'll tell you two small comments Juan. One is in relation to these workers who work in different regions of the world; They notice and realize this difference, because there is an illusion that is presented that is the idea of the Internet or online work, which was like a kind of universalization, of equalization in the set of workers who are connected to that network or that platform and who do work on demand for clients from different parts of the world. What these workers, especially Africans and Asians, noticed was that because of their geolocation, they were offered jobs with lower salaries than those in Europe and North America. So the strategy that these workers began to do was to try to hack the machine so that it would appear that they live in Germany.

JIC: That's the, what's it, "VPN" is?

Ivan: I don't know the name, but... Well, that in relation to that type of worker. And in relation to those of platforms, I was investigating the annual reports, the balance sheets of a platform, and in the year of the pandemic what appears is that they impose a "fair remuneration" program (which recognizes that they had been paying an "unfair" remuneration throughout the previous period), but when they have to explain why they impose that program they say: well, to avoid the shortage of delivery drivers and delivery workers' strikes. That is to say, as if capital itself began to see that this labor force was being consumed prematurely and that it was

exhausting it, and that it did not have delivery drivers to, in a process of sales expansion, continue recruiting new labor with the income they were paying, and that contradiction appears to them. Obviously, they are not resolved by saying: let's regulate the labor force, that there is an employment contract and well, the conditions change, but by looking for a program that adjusts a little that line of exploitation of the labor force. Nothing, like two expressions of this, of this particularity.

JIC: Yes, and it is also a moment when the workers have strength and threaten to form a union. And then that one is diluted...

Iván: And there are also regulatory bills. Like all that begins to appear in those two years of pandemic and then tends to dissolve. In Spain, for example, where there is a law, the two companies, the most important one flouts it directly. In other words, they have been in contempt of the Spanish state for two years of conflict.

JIC: And does the Spanish state look the other way?

Iván: I couldn't follow him so thoroughly. According to the headlines of the newspapers there is a war between the Minister of Labor and the platforms, which we have to see how real it is, but it seems that the minister has been constantly fining them. And the shareholders of this platform, which is Glovo in Spain and Delivery Hero globally, complain, they say that this purchase from Glovo was a disaster and an adventure and a kind of rescue. But the truth is that nowhere in the world does there end up being labor regulation, which for me is the enormous weight that the surplus working population has, where it appears as many times opposed to this type of regulation with the fear that they may lose their jobs.

JIC: Yes. The other thing that appears with these forms is what we were saying, the appearance that the individual is an independent producer of commodities. The other thing that appears is the form of consciousness that many of these workers have, the surplus working population, who see themselves as self-employed and become a ferocious reactionary mass. One might think that an Uber driver... That this was characteristic of taxi drivers: in Argentina the taxi drivers' regime was very much individually owned by the taxi, then there began to be some companies with fleets, but they were individually owned, and taxi drivers historically were more reactionary than possible. One thinks that those at Uber who have the evidence that they have to work with Uber because they don't even have enough to work as a taxi driver, one would think that they will maintain some awareness of their condition as sellers of frustrated labor power, and this is not the case at least because... I don't use them, these platforms, but by people who have told me that when, thinking this kind of thing, they tried to bring the conversation to a relationship of solidarity with the working class, they are worse than the taxi drivers, more reactionary, more with the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie than... But that's the process. Edgardo, you had wanted to intervene, excuse me Iván because Edgardo had...

Iván: You have to socialize the word, I think it's good [Laughs].

Edgardo: No, but my question about something very specific, when you were talking about the Japanese workers: if you were referring to the present moment or some moment in the twentieth century. You said that the workers with expanded subjectivity in Japan never reached the living conditions of the American workers.

JIC: More than not reaching the living conditions... The salary put what it put ... At some point Fernando said that they were 65%... Oh no, in Korea it was. But this: in Japan housing is still, by the standards that one can say in the United States for that type of worker, or in Europe, I understand that it is much more precarious.

The other thing that came up, and this is a study of, I think I mentioned it last time, late 1990s, early 2000s, of the limitations that Japanese scientists had in developing basic science, in a study by the United States Congress. At that time Japan were the competitors, so they looked at this, that they were very good at developing applied science, but that they could not produce basic science. And he did not give the explanation, but with the image of a strongly structured, disciplinary, top-down society... To do basic science, you need individuals who see themselves as free, to the point of not being able to have any results throughout their working lives. And for an individual who responds to a structure of strong discipline and who has to be accountable, that is incompatible, it leaves him totally out of place. So, it was this difference.

Now: I don't know today whether the purchasing power of the Japanese wage is equal to that of the United States or not. Again, with what I observed at the beginning: it may be that in order to produce an individual with the same productive attributes in Japan, you need a mass of use values or a type of use value that can be more expensive or cheaper than that of the United States; that due to the general structure of the history of that society a certain type of use values are consumed in one place and in the other place the need does not appear, and vice versa. I suppose that in Japan automobile consumption should not play the same role that it has played in the development of the United States, among other things, as a symbol of freedom. But no, it is risking an observation. I don't know what's going on today. Japan entered the...

Edgardo: The conclusion we can reach from all this development is that the productive attributes of each fragment of the national working class are mediated by the history of the nation, of that same national working class.

JIC: Exactly. The question is how long the old history is projected, how long the projection of that old history lasts. And it seems that even in a stage of the development of social life that is continuously revolutionized, there remain determinations of that historical differentiation that subsist over decades and decades. One is talking about almost a century and it would seem that these differences still remain.

I am going to take an example of different consumption of use values, but among the Yankees, having a weapon is part of the value of labor power (I don't know if it

is universal, but it is quite common), and I understand that in European countries it is not part of a necessary consumption. So, even with such a specific thing, having the weapon produces an individual who has, I don't know whether to call it "productive attributes," but has a productive subjectivity that is not the same as that of the individual who does not consume the weapon. Now, it may be that the individual who does not consume the weapon consumes other types of things that produce the same type of image about himself, that produce a similar consciousness, that fulfill the same role. But I don't know, that would have to be done very punctual, very difficult studies, because one also has to say: well, this one and this one are the same, but do they consume the same thing, work the same number of hours, see themselves in the same way? It's very difficult, I think.

Edgardo: I also think that there is a lot of historical research on the formation of each national working class, etc.

JIC: Exactly. It is not enough to look at its present, but where that present came from and also where this national process of capital accumulation is going, because I suppose that it is not the same to be a process that is stagnant as it is to be a process that is exploding. But well, all that makes it very delicate, I'm going to say, not difficult, to say: this is a population that is selling its labor power in a normal way, this is selling it below value. But when there is a significant difference in the conditions of reproduction of these two labor powers, there is no doubt that it may be that one is selling below value, but the other is sunk below value, there is no doubt that this is not the value of a labor power. Even more so when one looks at years of life, health conditions... In general, these situations are measured by income level, but when one looks at what is called the definition of "unsatisfied basic needs", it means points to a normative thing of what would be a normal reproduction of life; but this shows that he is a worker who is selling his labor power in conditions that he cannot reproduce.

The other element that plays out here is this: what labor power does capital need, let's call it "normal," the one that is being valorized at the general rate of profit? Because when one looks at capital that is not in those conditions, one of the bases for sustaining itself is precisely to pay for labor power below value. I return to Marx's development: what happens is that, in the subsistence of capital that is not in these conditions, there are different causes and there are different national processes that contain differences. But hey, here's what... I don't know if there's anything else they want...

Edgardo: Not for my part.

JIC: We move forward with the forms, so we continue with one more step [...].

Several things will appear in the development that Marx continues to do. When the stagnant surplus population appears in development and the possibility that capital has to accumulate on the basis of this cheapness of the labor force, and how this, what Marx synthesizes: maximum working day, minimum wage. What is going to appear is how this stagnant surplus population is being fed, and it is the development of machinery itself, the "exhaustion", he says, of certain industrial

branches, the development of machinery both in large-scale industry and in agricultural production... So, there we have this source of labor force that is being sold below value. And then, as accumulation develops, the base of this stagnant surplus population multiplies.

And here a question is going to appear that later, when we continue to look at the deepening of this surplus working population, we are going to see more developed, which is the specific law of the biological reproduction of the surplus working population. Because what Marx is going to observe is that the birth rate, the birth rate of the surplus working population, exceeds the birth rate of the employed working population. And that the lower the salary that this working population has, the less means of livelihood it has, the more members the family has. And he is going to make two observations. He is going to say: this is a law of population reproduction that would be nonsense for any "savage" society, any social form more primitive than the capitalist mode of production[319]. And the same is going to be said for the colonies. Why the association with the above social forms? Because if in those previous social forms there is no food, the population is reduced and births are reduced. And here what he observes is: the birth rate multiplies, the number of children per family multiplies.

And the other observation he is going to make is, he says: this "is a law that recalls the mass reproduction of individually weak and persecuted animal species."[320] I always associate this – Marx did not have the opportunity to see it – the example of what he is saying about the reproduction of persecuted and weak animal species individually, but it is inseparable for me from the image of documentaries, where one of those cases is: sea turtles that come to the sand to lay eggs, and a number of turtles are born that have to reach the sea, and on the way to the sea, the seagulls or some other seabird eat them, the only way for that animal population to survive is the number. The number has to be large enough so that, with a lot left on the way, there will still be enough to be able to sustain the reproduction of that one. So, here this same thing appears, in the sense that each individual is weaker and the way to sustain the reproduction of the life of those individuals is through the multiplication of the number.

Marx leaves it that way in the development. I propose that we stop and look at the concrete forms of this increase in the birth rate. Why? Here it is: because each member of the family is weaker, so the only way for that family to survive is with numbers, because along the way many are going to die. But one can look at the reasons for the increase in the birth rate not in this general determination, but by looking at the concrete determinations. So I propose that next time we start looking at those specific determinations and continue advancing.

Since this affects the countries of all of us markedly, I suppose it makes us dwell more on all the concrete determinations that appear, but it seems to me that it is worth explaining why this determination arises that is later used by the ideologues of capital to say: they live in misery because they have many children. And in this process, what I would also like us to develop is: what is the law of the biological

[319] Marx, K. (1977: 545), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[320] Ibid.

reproduction of the working population that is at the other pole of the surplus working population, of the working population that sells its labor power for value, or approximates value, and has to have the full productive attributes to make the work more complex, And what happens then to the process of biological reproduction of that part of the working population? So if you agree, next Wednesday we will start specifically with that [...].

[III]

[…] We had come to this that Marx posits about: for the stagnant surplus population, the law of biological reproduction that appears—which he says would be absurd in any previous social form—of the multiplication of births, the multiplication of the birth rate accordingly. The capital generated by this surplus working population, now the surplus working population itself in these conditions carries with it a factor of multiplication; Just as capital is the one that multiplies the generation of the surplus working population, now this multiplication has an additional determination, which extends the scope.

Marx follows from this. I had proposed to them, if you want, that we stop and look at two issues. One is the concrete form, Marx says: it is reminiscent of animal species where each individual is weak, fragile, and the only way to reproduce, to sustain oneself, is numbers. But one can look at the concrete forms how this movement is realized. And the other is, at this point in the development of the capitalist mode of production, to look at what happens to the law of reproduction of the working population that performs the most complex work. By Marx's time, the most complex work was reduced to this worker with more or less automated, developed machinery, which had workers who appeared as a main worker and auxiliary workers, but it is clear that today the development of this labor force, qualitatively, has a very different scope. So, I don't know if they want us to stop or if we keep moving forward.

Randy: For me, yes, okay, let's stop.

JIC: When one looks at the concrete forms that correspond, in general, not simply when we were looking, and we can say that the entire working population of Argentina is part of the surplus working population, at least, stagnant. In general, these are degrees of stagnation that already correspond more to the next step, because Marx does not propose it as one more step, but he is going to say that the part of this stagnant surplus population that reaches the extreme and that is consolidating in this condition... Well, we haven't seen that yet, but it corresponds rather to that part of the working population. I am going to raise some immediate aspects of what specific determinations play a role in the multiplication of the birth rate of this population.

In the first place, one has to incorporate the children of this part of the working class into processes, let's call them "production", in order to be able to reproduce the life of the working family very early, and consequently, very early they also contribute their labor power to the reproduction of that family. The concrete

expressions that one has is: much of the work of the cartoneros, it is a family work where very young children are participating, but then the different forms of child labor appear, where perhaps the adults of the family are not able to find a buyer for their labor force, for the child labor force, In conditions even more precarious than that of adults, there are capitalists who buy for this labor force. What UNICEF classifies as the "worst forms of child labor" appear, which do this, and there are three.

1) The first is child prostitution. 2) The other is begging, and in the case of begging it appears that the child has a virtue that the adult does not have, because when he asks an adult, the adult can be moved, let's say, by the child's fragility, while if he sees another adult, the reaction can be (something one hears every day here): "Go to work, I work, do the same thing I do." Therefore, it is a source of possibility of income for the family in conditions of surplus that is consolidating in this condition the recourse to child begging, which may have different modalities more open or more implicit. 3) And the third is drug trafficking, which since it is an activity that, in order to regulate the scale of consumption, if that commodity were sold simply at, let's call it, its price of production, consumption would absolutely exceed the needs of capital. It is the same thing that happens with alcohol, with tobacco, and so there are two possibilities of regulating that consumption: one is the special taxes that exist for each of these consumptions and the other is the illegalization of consumption. Since it is illegal, this increases the price of production (sorry, we are still here: that increases the value of this commodity), and through that illegality consumption is regulated.

And what happens in relation to this is that, since minors from the point of view of the legal relationship are considered individuals who are not free, they are not imputable, and while an adult would have the sanction of the law, the use of minors – in retail trafficking, obviously, because in other trafficking child labour is not useful – they have this competitive advantage from the point of view of the capital that operates in drug trafficking. Then, these forms appear in which it is immediately seen how children contribute early to the family income what the adults of the family, since they cannot find a buyer for their labor force, cannot contribute. I always cite a situation (which I don't know today what would happen, because this is a piece of information from many years ago), provided by a social laborer who knew the situation regarding the case of drug trafficking, what was happening in that family where the role of those who were the contributors to the economic relationship of the family was invested. And that the children were aware that it was an illegal activity, and then, the reflection of this in the conscience of those children, the reversal of the relationship, from adult providers, to minors who are providers of adults and through an activity of an illegal nature. So, well, we have these conditions that make the support of the surplus family based on the presence of the minors contributing to the family income.

Now, if one looks at it from the point of view of adults, several issues happen. First, in order to control the process of biological reproduction, it is necessary to have a certain knowledge about the functioning of one's own body, of one's own organism, and of the resources that can be used to control the birth process. And the more surplus a portion of the working population becomes, the less

possibilities it has of accessing knowledge of contraceptive methods and knowledge about one's own body. Then, the impossibility of consciously controlling this process of reproduction appears. Secondly, contraceptive procedures are a commodity that must be bought and that, for a family that does not have the social relationship to buy food, this takes a back seat. And the third question is what happens to subjectivity both on the side of men and on the other side of women of this surplus working population.

Let's put it like this: the more macho a society is, it is supposed, socially accepted to the vulgar conscience, it is presented to it in this way, that the duty of the adult male is, in order to affirm himself as an adult male, is to provide for the family. When one cannot, one is not in a position to sell labor power, this image of himself that the adult male may have of his condition of —I am going to put it in these terms— "male provider" is undermined. And one of the ways to vindicate oneself in the face of this is to affirm oneself biologically as a male, and the reflex is the multiplication of the possibilities of pregnancy. Conversely, or in a complementary way for women... I'm going to put it in these terms that he put it to me, I don't remember if it was this same person or it was someone else: in a situation of extreme poverty with a society with the presence of macho conceptions, the young woman, the adolescent woman, is the last on the social scale. On the other hand, the position of mother is the first step. So—this was raised when talking about unwanted pregnancies—what appeared in the work that this person did was this situation: it appears immediately as unwanted, but that in the end changes the situation of the young woman with respect to what place she has in her immediate sphere of coexistence; and at the same time, both men and women who are without productive activity, without anything else to do, the possibility of sexual intercourse can be made at any time and the possibility of pregnancy also appears multiplied.

So, when one looks at all these concrete determinations, one sees that it is not simply that individual fragility is compensated by the number, but that it is seen, it takes shape in this whole series of concrete forms. All of them converge in an increase in the birth rate of the surplus working population. The more it is consolidated in this condition, the more the concrete possibilities of increasing the birth rate multiply.

[…] If we look at the working population that is active and that does the complex work... Which does not mean that this working population is not also part of the surplus working population: now with the development of artificial intelligence, it is more or more imminent, I don't know in which newspaper I read today, that in Hollywood writers and librettists are extremely alarmed because they have developed scripts for films through artificial intelligence, it does not mean that the worker who can do the most complex work of all, suddenly does not find himself displaced by the development of machinery and becomes part of the surplus population; You may have a better chance of finding a buyer for your workforce, but nothing is guaranteed.

Iván: Yesterday, Juan, I listened to a very interesting interview with "Belinsky", a surname like that, who is an Argentinian who studies Artificial Intelligence[321], and what he was saying, it seems that he studied Artificial Intelligence about 15 years ago, he said that lately, a couple of years ago, he had been getting very bored, like nothing was happening, and suddenly everything began to happen in a very short time. And what he highlighted, which was like the great surprise that was shaking the world, is that the hypothesis that was being handled was that artificial intelligence and all computational developments were going to quickly replace simple or low-skilled work, which is the process that one was seeing in the history of capitalism systematically. But what began to surprise us is this ability to begin to replace complex work and creative work. And nothing, some examples that were impressive, for example, asked Artificial Intelligence to tell the Second World War with metaphors of makeup, and it seems that Artificial Intelligence made an impressive text using metaphors of makeup. Nothing, which is a very silly thing, but what he began to explain to her is that he has an ability to do creative work that probably no historian can do because, let's say, he does not have the ability to mix those two worlds that artificial intelligence is beginning to have.

And he also commented that there are already programs that replace programmers. For example, there is one that is, that one can program and there is a predictive programming text, and some programmers say that they start writing the code and when they go halfway through it it tells them the rest, or in some cases they correct it. And well, he says that obviously these jobs are not going to disappear, but that perhaps this artificial intelligence has the ability to multiply by five the work that a programmer used to do, that is, where five programmers were previously required, one is required, and so on with different skills. And he said that an AI-generated photo won a photography contest, as it begins to have a power in content creation that was something that, at first, it seemed that the machine was still very relegated.

JIC: Yes. Anyway, what he can't do is... In the first place, the creation that he makes is an association of existing, pre-existing things, because it is fed by that. And what it can't do is... I am going to put it like this: it cannot continue to affirm oneself through one's own negation, because that requires a process that organically is proper to a living being, and it has not yet reached that level.

Ivan: No, that's true, it has a limit.

JIC: What it can do is logical reasoning based on the information available to it. So when it appears as... It may be in that sense, but I don't think in that sense either...

Ivan: It seems to me Juan that the point there is, let's say, like... A large part of ourselves in our work what we apply is that form of reasoning, it is the conditional, 70% of the best programmer, or the best painter, or the best musician...

JIC: ... of the best university professor [Laughs].

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[321] It seems to refer to Santiago Bilinkis.

Iván: I don't know if you heard, but there is a course platform called, if I'm not mistaken, Udemy, which what it began to do was listen to the courses given by its professors. And there was a strike recently, because they wanted to replace about 200 or 300 teachers with artificial intelligence, which seems to have walked much better than teachers. That is, they could not do it, there were conflicts between teachers, but I mean, it is there.

JIC: It's on the way to that.

Ivan: And one could say, well, I don't know how to tell you... I would tell you: you, Juan, are not going to be replaced, but if I start giving what you give, they could replace me.

JIC: I retired preemptively on time [Laughs].

Iván: But I mean, it's clear that there is a sector that doesn't, and I don't know if I'm going to replace it either, but there's another part that, well, could perfectly move forward.

JIC: No, no, it is. But one has to consider that it is that, what it does is systematize what it has inside. The first experience with AI of this that is creative and I don't know what, I think it was Microsoft I don't know, five years ago (it was before the pandemic) and it quickly became... He fed on information and became a fascist, a Nazi, a racist, a xenophobe [Laughter], they allowed you to interact with him and you see that there was the intention of a whole line and they had to take the robot out of circulation that was chatting very friendly. But hey, yes, it's clear that everything... It is supposed to free the human consciousness to be able to think what it cannot think, but we will see if in the capitalist mode of production, let's say... In the capitalist mode of production, it is more likely that immediately what it will do is to multiply the surplus working population. Pedro, you wanted to intervene.

Pedro: Yes, Juan. With respect to what you were saying about the surplus working population, to the extent that it expands, that population increases, there is also the need for capital to eliminate a good part of that excess population and I don't know, I think it takes shape in those actions of the state, suddenly against the AMPA or things like that, that ends up annihilating some part of that population.

JIC: Now Marx puts it later, a little later; but yes, yes, let's look at that [...] of the limitation of the growth of the surplus working population, with some concrete expressions. Fernando.

Fernando: No, I stayed with the issue of the artificial intelligence debate, which is very long and perhaps not relevant here because we are directly looking at the question of the surplus working population, but an aspect that would be interesting to debate at some point is what progress these developments mean in terms of the ability to directly organize the process of social production. It would be interesting to look at that, in addition to this immediate capitalist consequence,

let's put it this way, of the multiplication of the surplus working population. Whether it is a simply quantitative leap or would it be some qualitative leap around the development of the capacity to consciously and voluntarily, directly, organize the process of social production.

JIC: Yes, it is better than yes.

Iván: Yes, and a very small thing. And it's very interesting how the social sciences see it. For example, I was reading an author called Zuboff, who has a book with a rather bombastic title, called *Surveillance Capitalism*, where she argues that these platforms, computer science, computer capital, what they are doing is surveilling people, violating them to the extent that they take and collect their data and use it as inputs in their production processes. But the interesting thing is that the horror of this researcher is that she said: "Let's go to a collectivism" [Laughter]. And then I thought about the cybercommunists who, well, a little bit see the same tendency, but they embrace it, they say: well, this is progress in the development of the productive and social forces. But I say, it is that debate, it seems to me that it is very latent, that are seeing how this development is advancing.

JIC: Yes, what happens is that then the cybercommunists say: that's it, with this development there is already the possibility of overcoming the capitalist mode of production, it is simply a matter of will, at least those I know.

Iván: Yes, I didn't read them, I still have to face them, if I only thought about it because of the name and so on, but if this author would turn your belly quite a bit.

JIC: [Laughs]. Well, let's go then to the law of the biological reproduction of the working population that makes the work more complex and has not yet been displaced by the machinery of that production process.

Here what appears is, precisely, what we advance when we look at what the capitalist mode of production does with the development of machinery, how it takes away from the capitalist the function of being the organizer of social labor done privately, and how that function is passed on to the body of the collective worker; And how, then, the first thing we had was: if with the first development of machinery capital needed workers who had a certain process of training or formal education, because that gave them a certain universality and put them in a position to join the labor process with machinery as organs of collective workers who were not going to learn in the production process itself, but they already had to have certain productive skills, an elementary education appeared up to there. But as this work becomes more and more complex, the time in which the individuals who carry these productive attributes need to be in the process of formal education is extended, which implies an extension of the process that is no longer primary school, it is not secondary school. it is not the university degree, but it is beginning to have the scope of university postgraduate degrees, and so on. And that, staying in the competition to develop that labor force to be able to sell it later, is incompatible or clashes with participating in the process of biological production, with the possibility of having and raising children.

And when that labor power completed what appeared to be its process of formation, and now capital is in a condition, or rather, that labor power is in a position to be fully put into production by capital... And one always has to remember this: capital, the only thing it has done while this labor power was developing, was to refrain from extracting surplus value from it, but it cost capital nothing, because what it cost to produce that labor power springs from the labor of the working population in activity. But now capital does want to take advantage of this labor force, to put this labor power into full operation, and then, the demand for labor intensity (which comes next) also clashes with the process of participating in biological reproduction. And so, the birth rate of this population goes down, and it goes down more and more markedly. The two immediate examples that one has of this, one is the academic field, where this is absolutely present, where it is known that one has to publish or perish, and then one has to be immediately responding to the demand for permanent work intensity, even in the process of training that workforce; and the same for individuals who, no matter in what aspect of the life of capital, which one ordinarily looks at as capital in office, are going to be demanded (it does not matter if it is in the technical area in the area of management of that capital, administrative management, whatever, a very high intensity of work is demanded). And then, the birth rate of this population drops sharply.

I had begun to observe a phenomenon more than twenty years ago, but in those twenty years the forms have changed strongly: what appears is a division in the labor of biological production and of the production of the productive attributes of the new labor force. And it is this: individuals who reach 40-45 years of age, and there they are at the point where they can begin to loosen the intensity of work (in the academic field it is more or less at the point where the individual can start to shit on others by rejecting their work and saying that they do not have the right merits) and no longer has to publish in desperation. For both men and women, reaching the age of 45 being totally unrelated to the process of biological production of new labor power and the formation of that new labor force is extremely complicated. First, because you have a life experience that has nothing to do with that other process. And second, awareness begins to appear regarding the risks it has in particular, it is known more immediately with respect to women as the age to participate in the reproduction process advances, but the risk of malformations is also present in men in individuals who have a high valuation for the capacity for intellectual work (considering all forms of intellectual work). And so, what appeared a few years ago is this division in the process of reproduction of labor power. These individuals do not participate in biological reproduction: biological reproduction is in charge of the surplus worker population, not so surplus that the conditions of reproduction of their natural life affect the formation of the fetus and the development of the intellectual capacities of the future individual, but... So, the process of biological reproduction to be in charge of this part of the population, and the process of production of that individual as the bearer of a complex labor force is going to be in charge of these other individuals that we were talking about.

The first form that appears of this is the process of adopting biological children of the surplus working population, that these individuals, those children, are taken

by this working population that does the complex work and is responsible for developing the productive attributes. The manifestation of this, I always raised it in these terms, the existence of this phenomenon, one at one time did not have to go looking for it in a scientific book, but had to go to look for it in the gossip magazines of show business, because that is where this process begins to become very evident, in actresses or actors who adopt children who are not from their own country, but are from places where there is an abundance of surplus working population. This is almost entering the afternoon gossip programs, but one of the most marked cases was that of Mia Farrow, who was adopting children from different national origins (she was married to Woody Allen), and one of the things that exploded in that relationship was that Woody Allen formed a couple with, I think it was, the first daughter that Mia Farrow had adopted. But this appeared like this.

There was a case in Argentina, which for those who know it, because of Argentines, will think that it is perfectly possible; for non-Argentines, they will think about what things can be said. But this character, Nicole Neumann, at some point in a report that was made on her, stated that she was hesitating between "Adopting a puppy or adopting a little black", so this was the image of the equivalence she had in this. Well, this phenomenon is developing, it is beginning to appear, already transcending the sphere of showbiz, as a present situation always associated with a surplus population in charge of biological reproduction, and a working population that does complex work occupied with the production of that labor power, individuals with consciousness, with the subjectivity of complex work. And with technical development (this is strongly linked to child trafficking, to forms of illegality, in part that option for children who are not from the same national space is linked to evading the rules that govern adoptions from the country of residence of those who do the complex work) the form of surrogacy begins to appear, the form of insemination, let's call it, "at a distance", and directly the open choice of who is going to participate in the process of biological reproduction by the subject who comes from complex work, from the societies linked to that complex work, and arises through the development of the system of machinery this form of division of labor of biological reproduction, of formation of the productive attributes of these labor forces, which is an international division of labor. So, what one finds is these transformations.

Well, this is basically what I wanted to raise. Just as when we looked at what happens to the most surplus population with its process of biological reproduction, which is determined by the movement of capital itself, to the population that does the most complex work, its process of biological reproduction is also determined by capital. Fernando.

Fernando: Yes, let me add some things that are interesting with what you were saying. First, as a function of this International Division of Labor, in countries where there is a surplus working population but at the same time conditions for a moderately healthy reproduction, it is responsible for providing for future generations who are going to participate in the reproduction of working families in countries where work is complex and the labor force is reproducing in a different way. it implies, as you said, forms of illegality, but it also implies forms of legality;

Because the process that is happening now is that in those countries of origin of the children, nothing, there are state mechanisms aimed at making that adoption flow, even with vaccination certificates and medical proof that the children who are going to be adopted are healthy and so on, through state mechanisms. So it may not comply with the legal conditions of adoption in the countries of the working population that does the complex work, but it modified the legal conditions of adoption in those countries (I don't know if it modified it, but it generated legal conditions) to make that adoption process flow. It is a process that I understand is taking place in recent years.

And the second issue, which is perhaps interesting to add to what you were saying, is the issue of the passage... I don't know if it's a step, but about the situation of egg donation, which is the option in which the woman can carry out the pregnancy process, but needs the donation of an egg from another woman who, due to an age condition, is fertile. And this is interesting because there is also a kind of international division of labor, where countries, one of the main ones was Ukraine and with the war that passed to Poland, they have catalogs of women who donate their eggs, and it is bought. And well, that is another aspect where perhaps the interesting thing about this is that the woman who wants to be a mother can carry out the pregnancy process but needs another woman's egg; and in the case of Argentina there is no catalog, there is egg donation legislation but it is not legal to select it through a catalog. It is interesting to see this figure. And well, this is one of the questions that we had talked about about how this appears, whether it is carried out in the salary or through the action of national states, both artificial insemination and egg donation and what need it indicates in that sense.

JIC: What you propose about the development of the legislation is reflecting... We have already seen: the legal superstructure is the form that takes as a direct, conscious and voluntary relationship the determination of people as personifications of capital. So, necessarily, these transformations in the process of biological reproduction take the form of legal regulations that give it shape so that it can flow no longer as a situation of exception or things like that, but as a more or less general condition. I had forgotten a question in this matter of labor intensity: in particular, in the case of women, capital, on this basis frees itself from the obstacles to the possibility of women being fully present in the production process, sustains intensity because the woman who does the complex work is on the margins of the process of biological reproduction. Thus, one can participate in the process of reproduction without participating in the biological one, and this allows capital to dispose of the person of the woman who does the complex work continuously, uninterrupted by the biological process of birth.

So, this contrast occurs, which is also reflected in the consciousness in particular of the members of the part of the working class that does the most complex work, the ideological representation that some are sensible and that the others are a bunch of unconscious because they have children "without thinking", let's put it that way. And then ideologically it appears as a critique of the surplus working population, what Marx says later: they accuse the surplus working population of being the cause of their surplus because they reproduce, it becomes the ideological discourse that intelligent and educated people behave in this way, and this other

part of the population is that the one who is to blame, because of their ignorance, of multiplying the number of children. [...]

What is going to appear in the development that Marx is making, after having proposed this law of biological reproduction? Here it will appear what is happening to the surplus working population as this situation worsens. And so, what he is going to propose is, he says: the last remnants of relative overpopulation are those that take refuge in the orbit of pauperism. When it is going to refer to pauperism, it is going to refer to assistance to be able to survive because there is no longer labor power to sell, this is the figure that will appear centrally. And the figure of what is still used the German term, of the *Lumpenproletariat*, or the "ragged proletariat", will appear.

And Marx is going to make this differentiation: when he refers to this ragged proletariat he is going to put the vagabonds, the criminals, the prostitutes as separating them from the sale, or the attempt to sell labor power, and considering prostitution not as a job, but as a form of social relationship that does not involve a productive expenditure of labor power. but... It is not stated what, but one could associate it with an appropriation of the person himself, with the possibility that the client appropriates the person of the prostitute. I don't remember if when we started in some workshops there was a lot of discussion, not here but very early on, about whether prostitution was work — if you have the labor power of another individual — or if what happens is that you have the person of the other individual. But what it is going to propose is that they are included in relative overpopulation, the last remains of relative overpopulation. The Lumpenproletariat, he says, leaving these aside, is made up of these others. And so the Lumpenproletariat is also included there. And what he is going to propose is: people who are still in a position to work but cannot find a buyer for their labor power, then he says: orphans, children of the poor, degraded, incapable of work, and who are then condemned not to be able to get out of this condition and that only includes the workers, he says, who survive the normal age of their class, and those who have been mutilated, sick... It includes widows, with an image that it is the adult male who sells labor power centrally, and this condition appears.

In general, when I expose it, I take it as if it were the surplus population that is consolidated in this condition of surplus – Marx uses the term "consolidated" – as if it were a fourth level; it can also be read in this way in Marx because it says: finally, there is this (but he does not give it a name, as he gave to the three previous parts). And what one has there is that what capital does to that mass of the workers' overpopulation, first, is to wrest from them the exercise of their ability to work. And when this condition deepens, what directly takes away is the ability to work: it is no longer the exercise, but the capacity itself. The individual who is the product of the life process of a working overpopulation that is consolidated in this condition from one generation to another, no longer has productive attributes in his person, he no longer knows how to work. The first generations had this ability to work and capital has deprived them of the possibility of exercising it, of applying it. There comes a time when it directly took away from that overpopulation the ability to work.

And this is linked to, when one looks at it, what happens with the educational training process of that population. That what we had was that in order to work in large industry you need to go through a process that develops certain universal capabilities. I'm going to take the example of Argentina, but I suppose it's more universal: when school, for a substantial part of the working population, ceases to be the place where one goes to learn to work, to be the place where one goes to eat because there is no food at home, then what is appearing is this transformation. It is no longer simply to deprive that worker of the exercise of the capacity to work, but it is to deprive him of that capacity.

And then, what we have in front of us, I always care to emphasize, is the extent to which the alienation of the working class as an attribute of capital is manifested; Marx, when we were still looking at the process of normal reproduction of the working class with the productive attributes, appeared that even in the process of individual consumption, the working class is an attribute of capital, here what we have is that capital comes to wrest from that working population what is its generically human condition. Because when we start and look at that condition that is the human generic being, that generic being is born from work. When a part of the human population is stripped of its ability to work, then what is being taken away is its humanity. And this is what the capitalist mode of production does: it reduces that part of the working population to the condition of an animal. If there is something in the environment in which he is in which he can appropriate himself, then he can reproduce his life. If in that environment he has to act productively, and he does not have the possibility of doing so because he does not have this access to the means of production, but also because in his person he does not have the necessary attributes to be able to carry out the work... So, for me this is one of the strongest aspects of what the generation of the worker, of the working class in Capital, means.

But I also add to this a further step, which cannot be in the text of *Capital*, because when Marx looks at what is happening to the worker with the development of large-scale industry, the possibility does not appear that the workers are the ones who manage the personifications of capital in office. While the capitalist class is the one that manages capital, what we are looking at, this wresting humanity from a part of the working population, is what the capitalist class does to the working class; But when one sees that it is the working class itself that acts in the management of capital, that it carries with it the contradiction of being the personification of labor power, of the seller of labor power, and at the same time being the personification of the buyer of labor power, what one has in front of one is: this is what the working class does to itself. And then, what becomes clear is to what extent what we saw when we looked at the class relationship and how within the relationship of class solidarity the antagonism between buyer and seller of labor power was introduced, here what one has in front of us is how far that antagonistic relationship goes within the working class itself: A part of the working class sees to it that another part of the working class loses all productive attributes. I don't know if they want to raise something.

Edgardo: Juan, yes, I wanted to give a specific case that is something that appeals to me very directly because I live in Mexico, but it is the case of the labor

force that is employed, so to speak, by drug trafficking, that I am inclined to think that this labor force is a consolidated worker population. Let's say, the productive attributes that a hitman has to have is a detachment from others, a fanaticism for violence... I don't know how to name it: cutting someone's head, diluting another person in acid, let's say, for me that is a total loss of productive attributes. So I don't know if you would agree with me on this one. And also something that Pedro had mentioned a while ago, it seems to me that it is also a way in which capital gets rid of surplus working class, which no longer serves it or no longer needs it.

JIC: Yes, I would express it in these terms: when one's own life is worth nothing, the life of others is not worth anything either. So, it is reached that point in which the condition of surplus implies that one does not have any productive attribute, that survival is a circumstantial condition, let's say, on which the individual has no possibility of operating, well: drug trafficking is one of the ways of selling what one should call "labor power". because in fact, the drug traffickers who employ these hitmen, and the small traffickers in retail trafficking and so on, extract surplus value from them. Although they extract surplus value from them, beyond the fact that a part of the price of the product is linked to what we talked about before, it is not simply the value for the amount of socially necessary abstract labor that is materialized, but that... One could come to think that in any case it is the value considering that part of that socially necessary abstract labor is to kill other individuals, it is the role of the hitmen, but there is also land rent, there is a rent based on illegality itself, which we have already entered another terrain. But it is this, in effect, Edgardo, that you propose, that labor force (if that can be called "labor") is recruited from the consolidated surplus population, where there is no way to sell labor power other than in that activity or in that form.

This is punctual, but for many years an article that I had read, I don't know, it was a magazine, I don't know if it was The Economist, or some Yankee magazine, which related the case of an individual in India who had been rescued by some nuns from a pile of corpses, he was lying as part of the pile of corpses, and the nuns had realized that she was alive. And then, this is from the 80s, when HIV began to spread, and well, he had recovered, and they didn't give him any more food, and then, in order to eat, he sold his blood, and the question they asked him was if he wasn't afraid of catching HIV in blood transfusions. And this person's answer was: the options I have is to die today because I don't have enough to eat, or to die a little later because I was infected.

Those are the expressions... I always put it this way too: as these discourses of "socialism and barbarism" appear, my answer is: the capitalist mode of production is barbarism. Barbarism is not a mode of production where there is no production... Nothing: it is the capitalist mode of production. But hey, this is what we are facing. I don't know if they want to propose anything else. Well, if not, let's go to the other part that has already appeared twice about what happens when the surplus population, especially this one that is consolidated, grows beyond what capital serves to valorize itself. You have to think that it can be very consolidated and serve capital to appreciate itself. Because, I don't know if it is known by these same terms, but the cartoneros are consolidated surplus population that serves the capital that buys the waste, that buys the cardboard, that capital serves to valorize

itself. So, we had seen what Marx proposed: well, they go there to the place where the machinery has not yet been fully developed, to more degraded jobs, but the scale, so to speak, goes on and on, and reaches these points that we were looking at here. So two things happen that, so to speak, complement each other, which are the two sides of this unity.

From the point of view of capital, there may be a very large mass of population left over, and it is placed at the service of the process of valorization. And therefore, how much does capital have to have left over? It has a very large extension. We saw that it sharpens the competition among workers to sell their labor power, and the sale of labor power below value reaches the absolute limit that the individual is no longer in a position to present himself or to carry out the labor activity. Not only does he no longer have the attributes that may be needed for the organization and management of his work, but he no longer has the physical strength to get up and go to the place where he has to do his work. And so, the extreme to which the sale of labor power for value labor can go is very extensive. […] From the point of view of capital, this is a source of valorization, and capitalists appear, part of the capitalist class, who sustain their accumulation in this beyond the general movement.

From the point of view of the development of the productive forces of social labour, in the first place, the surplus working population is a waste of potential labour power, which is a ferocious mutilation of the development of the social productive forces, but at the same time, the cheapness of the labour force, we saw that what it does is to make the incorporation of machinery more difficult; Therefore, from the historical point of view of the historical development of the capitalist mode of production, it is an obstacle to the development of the productive forces [...], the capitalist mode of production lifts this double obstacle: it wastes enormous masses of labor power and slows down the development of these productive forces through the transformation of the materiality of labor.

So when does he start to have too much left over? It has a very large field to spread out. […] Now I stop, Fernando proposes, and I am going to the extension of that field.

Fernando: No, it actually has to do with what Edgardo asked about the drug trafficking workforce and the last thing you're saying about when what is left over already begins to hinder the flow of accumulation. You gave the example of the cartoneros, which is a branch of production that is valued by exploiting this surplus and consolidated labor force; Edgardo gave the example of drug trafficking... And indeed, what one has, we saw it when we were doing the article on Central America, is that it is a labor force that develops specific productive attributes for that type of activity, of work [...], and it contradicts itself in a national scope of accumulation... I don't know if you see it so much in Mexico, maybe in some regions of Mexico, but in Central America, for example, in El Salvador you see it in the whole area of capital accumulation: it contradicts with, let's say, a process of accumulation of other types of capital. What we saw was that the textile maquila in El Salvador appears to be limited, and when we asked ourselves the question about why this happened, the issue of whether there are sufficient conditions for a

process of accumulation of capital appeared, let's put it like this, compared to drug trafficking capital, a common capital. traditional, where the labor force that capital needs can reproduce in a normal way, and not with fear of going out on the street and being killed on the corner — let's put it that way. And it is as if a dispute arises between what capital he can impose... Not to impose, but what form the accumulation of capital in that country is going to take depending on what type of capital is going to be valorized.

I bring up the case of El Salvador because it is interesting what is happening with the Bukele government and the whole offensive against the gangs about what is happening there; If what is happening there is that the surplus population is already beginning to surplus in such a way even for drug trafficking capital, there is a need for the accumulation of capital in that country to develop other forms of... Anyway, it is not a question that we have to answer now, but I say, to mark that, when the total capital of society begins to be left over, it can be expressed through a dispute between different sectors of that total capital.

JIC: No, what you said is understood. That is to say, there is no room for production at that level, let's call it "general". And then, capital could use the labor force that exists in that national sphere for its valorization in the textile industry, but it cannot use it because the conditions of reproduction of that labor force, in what you were saying, cannot go out on the street to go to work normally because they are going to be murdered on the corner. They are the concrete forms, and yes, that is the capitalist mode of production. I don't know if they want to propose something related to this. Well, I take this.

What Marx is going to propose is that capital gets rid of the need to sustain this surplus population, and unloads it, he says, on the working class, on independent producers of commodities. Now: when you don't look at that, what you're going to find is the following. If he unloads it on the working population, as the worker who is active — let's take it in the best case scenario — is selling his labor power for value and now has to support another seller of labor power who cannot find a buyer, he has to do this at the expense of the normal reproduction of his labor power. Therefore, the mere fact of generating the surplus working population means that part of the working population that is employed can no longer reproduce its labour power normally. And so, if one looks at it from the most general point of view of the movement of capital, capital cannot let the support of that surplus working population fall on the active workers because otherwise it will be left without labor power reproduced under normal conditions.

So, we have this determination, and Marx is going to say: this is one of the "false costs" that capital has, that has to sustain that working population, but he says: well, he gets rid of it, unloading it on the working class and the small middle class. So, when one looks at this, what appears is: to what extent is this working population that appears consolidated not valuing capital, in the absolutely deteriorated conditions of its labor power, by which capital, that which allows it to be valued, makes the maintenance of this consolidated surplus population not fall *indirectly* on capital at the expense of the value of the labor power of the workers who are in activity. And when one looks in Argentina, looking back at the political

forms, it is taking place very markedly, an antagonistic relationship is developing between the workers who sell their labor power and those who cannot find a buyer for their labor power with the discourse that the workers who sell their labor power are in precarious conditions because they have to maintain the surplus part of the working population. And then another antagonistic relationship appears within the working class between the employed workers and the unemployed workers that in Argentina is becoming very strongly visible, in levels of stagnant surplus population with extremely precarious conditions for the sale of their labor power, the image is "I am in this situation because I have to keep these lazy people". [Responding to the chat:] Did you say the retirees, Fernando?

Fernando: No, I'm saying that the most extreme forms of that discourse, it seems that we are like this because we have to "maintain" the retirees, or those who retired through the moratorium without contributing or whatever; but those forms appear that are also an expression of the surplus working population, because that is an expression that that individual, that is supposedly selling its labor power for its value, did not do it that way.

JIC: Indeed. The ideological discourse is "intergenerational solidarity"; The reality is that the working population that was forming the fund, which was going to receive when its useful life for capital ended, all that fund that was part of the value of labor power because it was the condition for that worker in activity to be able to reproduce normally, disappeared by some means that was not the pocket of the retirees. if not, tell me, please [rubs his hands].

Fernando: Is a new disappearance coming?

JIC: A new disappearance?

Fernando: I mean, with this thing about the dough and so on, to change it... to grab the money from the house and... [Laughs].

JIC: It's going to take another cut. Yes, Pedro, you wanted to participate.

Pedro: Yes, Juan. I live in Venezuela, I think that example here was quite marked, where a good part of the government, Chavismo, gave a lot of subsidies to that surplus working population. I imagine that the need for capital was to expand consumption, to be able to buy the products that the bourgeoisie imported here, and a number of subsidies were given and that contradiction appeared very marked, to the point that those workers who sold their labor power were normally against all these subsidies for the same reasons that you already argued. and they had to support them, and well, they accused them of being lazy, sell-outs. And for the other sector of the surplus working population, he accused the others, well, of imperialist pitiyanqui, any kind of these epithets. And I am also struck by the point made by the diagnosis made by the left: it stated that the working population that lived off subsidies was the revolutionary subject, and in that contradiction, the "revolutionary Marxist" position was to support those sectors; And well, today there is nothing left of that, but that contradiction was very, very marked years ago.

JIC: Yes, and the revolutionary subject as the working population is not only in Venezuela, apart from the fact that it also appears here, it appears in different forms with this (but Edgardo is going to say it more precisely): latent surplus population that survives on the basis of production for self-consumption, appears vindicated, also presented, as the revolutionary subject, because the image is that it is outside the capitalist mode of production. It is outside the general process of production, but it is not outside the capitalist mode of production: it is the product of the capitalist mode of production.

Fernando: Zapatismo?

JIC: Yes, the ideological image of Zapatismo, of peasantism, of...

Edgardo: David Harvey is one of the celebrities who holds that position.

JIC: Well, Harvey, Holloway... what's the name of this Yankee?

Edgardo: They call it the precariat now, which is the precarious proletarian.

JIC: That this is the revolutionary subject. But the peasant proposals in Mexico, what is it called, "David..."?

Edgardo: David Barkin. [...] but hey, there's also Armando Bartra...

JIC: Of course. We had a discussion with Barkin at a meeting in Mexico, where it appeared that these subjects are outside the capitalist mode of production and that is why they are free and are the revolutionary subject. And what one is faced with is: a part of the surplus working population, which could not even confront capital so that it would not convert it into surplus when it was still participating in the production process, was active in the production process, is outside the production process, on what basis can it be the bearer of the development of the productive forces and consequently of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production? But well, they are all expressions of ideological inversions regarding the historical character of the capitalist mode. Yes, Fernando.

Fernando: It is interesting to see the weight that the small agricultural productions that these populations have in the consumption of the working population that sells its labor power to the capitals of these areas have in some national areas of accumulation. I was just looking, I was talking about it several months ago with Ana Villar, who was watching it for Paraguay, and I understand that in Mexico that is also quite central, and here in Argentina there are also aspects that appear on that issue. I was also talking to a colleague who was an anthropology scholar who told me about the use of land from the Law of Communities of 1994, I think it is with the change of the Constitution, that a somewhat strange figure appears, she told me, where the community is the owner of the space of land, and appears as the environment where that surplus working population can reproduce and produce very cheaply for the consumption of a certain part of the working population that sells its labor power to capital, and above all foodstuffs.

JIC: Today we were just talking about it in the previous workshop with Ana Villar, that type of condition, as far as it is present... not in the case of Paraguay, we were talking about it.

Edgardo: But Fer, I didn't quite understand what the figure you are referring to is. In other words, the small peasant producer I was talking about, which exists in Paraguay, surely in Mexico as well.

JIC: I think that in Mexico there are more communities based almost on bonds of personal dependence, and that is why the appearance that this link is the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production is very much fed, which are the figures that Barkin claims and that Holloway claims. In what Fernando said about Paraguay, it is a peasant population that appears as independent producers of commodities and that they do not even obtain the equivalent of a salary from the sale of their products, that what they get is less than a salary. So, first there's this kind of figure.

When the commodities of these producers are sold, they are sold at a price... It complicates one thing for me because it comes from later, but I simply put it as a statement for what we are looking at. With the development of the capitalist mode of production, the independent producers of commodities who subsist, the price of their commodities is no longer determined simply by value: it is subsumed in the general movement of capital. It is as if he were a capitalist even though he has no capital, he is an independent producer of commodities who uses only his labor power, he does not buy labor power, he does not have constant capital, but from the point of view of the regulation of his participation in social production, he functions as if he were a small capitalist who buys his own labor power. and that those means of production that it has are equivalent to a constant capital, and can be sustained in production.

Linked to this, what happens to them is... that we had spoken of it when we were talking about the latent surplus population: the means of production can no longer be replaced, this which appears as their constant capital... (it is also a term that comes later) can no longer reproduce, it can no longer recover the value of its means of production. The price at which he sells his commodities, governed by the general movement of capital, does not even allow him to obtain the equivalent of a wage. Well, these commodities, on this basis, may be coming into circulation below what would be the normal condition of capitalist production (which I do not want to raise because that is in Volume 3). If a capital, in order to produce this, has to be sold at 100, these producers – moreover, in the competition they establish among themselves and with this limit of subsistence – can sell it at 50. So what happens to the difference between 50 and 100?

Let's assume that 100 was the value was the value and this is being sold at 50: who appropriates the missing 50 to arrive at the value of that commodity? Do buyers in general in society appropriate it because they buy for 50 something that should be paid at 100? This is a possibility. Is it appropriated by the classic figure of this, an intermediary who buys them for 50 and sells for 100? And another

alternative is: the workers buy it from capital in general (let's suppose, from the capital that normally operates in that territory): the workers pay that commodity at 50, they receive a use value (let's say that this commodity is the only use value that responds to the reproduction of labor power), they reproduce their labor power normally if they receive 50 for something that is worth 100, and consequently, when the capitalist who buys their labour-power pays them 50, these workers reproduce their labour-power in a normal way because they obtained the use-values that were needed, but the capitalist sells the commodity produced by these labourers at value. So, he was left with a mass of value that went from 50 to 100 because he bought the labor power of his workers at 50. Let's suppose that all he does is resell this commodity, his workers paid 50 to be able to... It's absurd what I'm saying, the example is not right, but hey: the workers paid 50 and reproduce their lives normally. The capitalist resells the commodity for 100 and consequently, beyond the surplus value produced by his workers, he was left with 50 of value that is not produced by his own workers, but comes from the value that this commodity had in its original production. I don't know if it was understood. And Edgardo in particular, tell me, because it tells me what situation we were talking about.

Edgardo: Yes, yes, yes. I think that also happens in Mexico, but yes.

JIC: So, it is: what role does the survival of this surplus working population play, which is in productive activity, which produces even under the guise of being independent producers, not sellers of labor power, owning their own means of production, and yet selling below value, and then that is going to benefit the population in general because they buy something for less than it is worth, but when one looks at it, the population that buys are workers who sell their labor power, then the beneficiary is the capitalist who buys that labor power, because it buys cheaper.

Edgardo: A quick thing, but isn't there, let's say, a legally recognized labor relationship between that capitalist and the independent, mercantile producer, the only thing the capitalist does is buy his product below its value?

JIC: It may even be that the capitalist is not the one who buys the product below value, but it is the workers who buy the product. They pay it below value, and then, when they sell their labor power to the capitalist, the capitalist, if the value was 100, pays it at 50. Now, from the worker's point of view, it received all the use values that corresponded to normality. But the capitalist, indirectly, was the beneficiary of the fact that the formally independent producer of that food, for example, which the worker bought, sold it to the worker at less than value, now the worker sells his labor power. Here the problem is that he sells it at a price that is below the value of that labor power, but from the point of view of the worker this is indifferent, because he obtained the use value that corresponded to the value of his labor power. But now the capitalist bought a cheapened labor power thanks to the existence of the small independent producer, and the capitalist or the capitalist class as a whole is going to be the beneficiaries of the existence of these independent producers.

We have to see what weight these productions have in order to be able to say if this indeed plays a central role, for example, in the reproduction of labor power or if this happens in this place, in that place, where it may be that the capitals of that place benefit from this, but it is not the general condition of the cheapening of labor power for capital. This would be the figure that appears and that is... Well, in Argentina there is a strong demand on the part of the movements of the unemployed, to work very precariously, producing in a way that is not very precarious. of what appears as an independent production of not individually, but collectively. It is the "community" or the collective of the movement of the employed that is going to produce as if it were a non-capitalist production. Fernando, you say and I... short right away.

Fernando: A couple of things I wanted to contribute about that. In other words, in the first place, the issue that these productions are usually developed through direct personal relationships – family work and so on – and one of the forms of these direct personal relationships that I wanted to highlight and that I don't know if this figure also appears in Mexico, is the work of a community that claims to be ideologically the ancestral owner of a set of lands and organizes its process productive in a way that appears ideologically as non-capitalist, and ends up having this role of cheapened sales.

And in relation to the last thing you said about the weight of this, it would be interesting to look at what weight all these proposals are having in what is called the "popular economy", and in particular the state expressions on this. Because, I don't know the opinion of the current one, but I remember a previous Minister of Social Development saying that the plan he had to lower inflation was to bring the producer closer to the consumer, so that 50 pesos in your example, that the supermarket kept, went directly to lower the price of the product. And so, the plan on the part of the state was to expand, if you will, the production of some commodities part of the value of labor power through these precarious forms, and state programs to expand it, the political representative of capital as a whole of society operating in that way.

JIC: Yes, yes. I propose that if you want the next one we will come back to this. Because we still have to see about the workers' overpopulation, there are two things: [...] the limits to the expansion of the relative workers' overpopulation, the forms taken by those limits imposed by capital, and trying to complete the development that Marx makes in this chapter on what the general law of capitalist accumulation is, right? See you in...

Edgardo: We had agreed to discuss a comparison between the working conditions of different countries in the region at the end of this chapter.

Pedro: Juan, and you didn't comment on Volume 2, of Tomás Friedenthal's training.

JIC: I spoke with Tomás, who intended to start Volume 2 on May 27, but I dissuaded him by saying that... We will try to finish in May, but not before May 27. [...].

[IV]

First, if there is anything of the much we were seeing last time, you say. There is nothing from the outside. We had arrived, in the development of the surplus working population, the relative workers' overpopulation, to what Marx is going to put as the "last remnants" of the relative overpopulation. And what we have is, we used it as a term, they are *consolidated* in this condition. What, if I remember correctly, we had started but not developed, is the question of when it has too much surplus working population, what forms it has; how, what Marx says, capital gets rid of the burden, this false cost that the presence of the surplus working population has, the unloading on the working class in activity, the unloading on the petty bourgeoisie, but finally there is a point at which it will directly govern, it will directly regulate the magnitude of this consolidated population in its condition of surplus.

I don't forget (because Edgardo is going to challenge me if I forget) the other aspect that we had left, which was to see manifestations of the development of this surplus population that is consolidating in the different countries, or I had spoken of the only specific case I know of, that of Argentina. I don't know how far Edgardo in particular wants, that you raised it, in interest, with what degree of detail do you want us to see it.

Edgardo: No, with whoever I think is necessary, we don't have to stop there for long.

JIC: If you want, I will put it with – I think I had already raised something – an expression that for me is like this, punctually, very expressive, of how capital first takes away from this part of the surplus working population the exercise of its ability to work and, finally, takes away its ability to work. And the expression of that is in a substantial part of the public education system in Argentina (with the clarification that public education in Argentina is free, because this condition is not common to other Latin American countries), where one had that the function of the school is that the future worker learns to work, [...] develop the capacity for collective work, he will not be able to develop productive skills in the work itself, he has to enter with certain general attributes and also, the longer he is in the process of educational training, the more universal his labor force is and therefore the more plastic he is to change concrete labor as the technical conditions of production change, because the value of the labor power of the previous generation includes what that generation that is going to school needs to consume in order to reproduce its natural existence.

I don't know if we saw it in this workshop, why free public education, from the point of view of the whole of society's capital, is a source of appropriation of surplus value that is liberated by the non-existence of the private capitalist of education. Did we see it, and what is the source of that surplus value?

Edgardo: I think so, but very in passing.

JIC: This is (I have a graph, but I put it verbally): suppose that the only use value that the worker needs to consume—moreover, it is the future worker—in order to have labor power to sell, and then when he is selling labor power, that is the only use value he needed to consume, is that educational process. In this educational process, work is expended, and that work is done by the teachers of public education, who, like any salesman of labor power, work a day and only a part of that day is paid. Many years ago, if it ever happened that teachers in Argentina were not paid the value of the labor force, but let's assume that the part paid corresponds to the value of the labor force.

If the labor power of the workers — I now leave aside those of education and pass to the workers in general — if the education consumed by the workers and which enters into the determination of the value of labor power is a private education, the capitalist of private education sells education at its value, it sells education to the total amount of work that is enclosed in that educational process. But like the state, the proposal that is made is that it will not have a surplus or deficit, what it does is collect taxes; indirectly, it receives from all the capitalists of society a quantity of taxes that correspond to the value of the labor power of the teachers of free public education. And therefore the whole of the capitalists of society buys this labour-power not by paying the full value, but by paying the value of the labour-power which produced it, but afterwards sells the commodities produced by their educated labourer in free public education at their value. And therefore, he bought the labor power — let's put it at a surplus value rate of 100%, half of the day paid, half of the day unpaid — at 50% of its value and sold the commodity produced by that worker at 100% of its value, and appropriated the difference in surplus value that there is between that he paid him 50, and the part of the commodity which he sells for its value, which is... Because if I take it only in this, it is cut off and a part of the value is missing. The worker produced surplus value, but in addition, his labor power cost half the value of the capitalist who bought it. And then, when he sells the commodity that this worker produced for its value, he appropriates the surplus value that this worker produced, but in addition, he appropriates the surplus value that corresponds to the fact that labor power paid for half of its value. This part of surplus value was not produced by the worker in general: it was produced by the worker in free public education, who was appropriated by the capitalists in general when they were able to buy this labor power by paying for it at the value of the labor power of the teachers in public education and selling the commodity produced for the full value.

Was it understood? There is surplus value there... When the chinchulines are sold[322], there, a part of the surplus value that the capitalist appropriates from the chinchulines has been produced by the teacher of free public education. Because if the manufacturer of chinchulines had had to pay his worker for private or fee-based education, and that fee-based education, the one who sold the private education to the worker had charged it for its value, then the value of the labor power — in this simple example — would be double what he is paying. That

[322] https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinchul%C3%ADn

missing part of the value of the worker's labor power is surplus value produced by the education worker that the capitalist appropriates production in general.

This is true of *all* the productive use-values produced by the state in general. In Argentina, with privatizations, it is easy to see: when the state produced electricity, even though it also had a deficit, but what it charges as a tariff is what it costs, [...] it does not charge the price of electricity production: it only charges the cost price. Consequently, the capitalist who buys this electricity has a product that contains a certain amount of labor time and pays for it indirectly—or in this case, directly, for the tariff, which is only the cost price—below the value of that which he bought. He sells his commodity for value; That difference that he bought, in this case, a means of production systematically below value, not by accident, because the one who sold it to him, sold it at cost price, means that he is going to appropriate more surplus value. That surplus value is not produced by its workers, it is produced by the workers of the public service. When one looks at a whole series of nationalization processes, which go beyond those of Argentina – in France, in Italy, in Spain, I think also in England – in a certain historical period, these nationalizations are made to sustain production in general within the national sphere: to sell cheap conditions, means of production, to all the capitalists. It harms the capitalists of education, in this case that we were looking at initially, because they cannot compete, because they have to sell their commodity for the full value, but it benefits all the capitalists of society. Was it like that, verbally, more or less clear?

Fernando: There is one thing that I never quite appropriated on this issue, I think it is clearer out there in the example of the production of electricity. What about the necessary part of the innovation of the production process that is supported by the valorization of capital, that is, in an expanded reproduction of that capital? In the case of the public company, there is no profit part, therefore there is no expanded reproduction, it should perhaps be carried in an increase in taxes necessary to make the innovation.

JIC: Yes, or in a stagnation of productive capacity, which in the long run will be reflected in the fact that energy becomes more expensive. With another clarification: in the case of these nationalizations (in Argentina as well), where the tariffs for the sale of the so-called "public services" are below the price of production, it is not necessarily transformed into surplus value for these capitalists, but it is transformed into the possibility of subsistence, because they cannot sell the commodity they produce for the value or their other costs of production are such that they could not afford them if they don't have this cheap. So, indirectly in that case it is also surplus value that this capitalist has left, but it may be the only surplus value that this capitalist has left, it may be that he cannot even extract surplus value from his own workers because the productivity of labor is so low that, no matter how much they work full time and receive the value of labor power, In competition you have to sell below value, because if not, you can't sell. So, well, there is a whole series of complexities.

Now: if I go back to education, that was the history of free public education in Argentina, and since the general form of capital accumulation changes (what we

also saw, I think we saw in general, which happens in the mid-70s, to the early 80s), the overpopulation of workers is beginning to multiply, and there is already a massive consolidated population in this condition of surplus, a stagnant population that can no longer reproduce itself... That has concrete expressions such as, I never remember who he was, but he was one of the two right-hand men of Martínez de Hoz, the Minister of Economy of the last dictatorship (I have the misfortune that I remember the name of the other and never of this one) who proposed that Argentina was a country for 12 million people, and the Argentine population was 24 million people. And then there have been those who have repeated this, and in general, it always gives them half, which has increased the population, and the proportions of how many Argentina is for has grown. What it is showing is an increasingly large mass of consolidated surplus population. What is the reflection of that, that population unable to sell its labor power?

On the one hand, it begins to fall into what Marx proposes here, of pauperism, that one can only live from what appears, in the terms of Marx's time, from public charity. Then, there are plans that compensate either the sale of labor power below value or directly the impossibility of selling that labor power. And at the same time schools, especially primary schools, but now it has spread to secondary schools in many areas, become the places where the children of the working class family that is in this situation of consolidated surplus only go to eat. They are in such a state of malnutrition, exhaustion from child labor, desperation to eat, that all they can do is go to school to eat. So that, for me, is one of the crudest expressions of the transformation of the Argentine working population en masse into a surplus population that is not simply stagnant, but is already consolidated in this condition because it no longer has a labor force.

This had a first political reflection, which I suppose it still has, but which was raised to me many years ago, 15 years ago, by a political militant in a university that is in an area with a massive consolidated surplus population, in the impossibility of having discipline for militancy: individuals who committed themselves to a task and did not comply with a schedule and did not appear, and so on. And in reality, that discipline is acquired in the labor process, outside the labor process it begins to be indifferent what time of day you are, what commitment you have to collective action, and it begins to be reflected in this way.

Now, I always use this example as one of the expressions of stagnant surplus population in Argentina, but I use the other expression that I think we already talked about here, about other countries in Latin America, that we locals know what scope it has, but one of the expressions that appear now is: workers who are with all the formalities that correspond to work in legal conditions, whose income places them below the poverty line. Today I didn't see the news, but it seems that a union leader has said that in reality that is not the case, because that is when you look at the situation saying that in the family income there is only one income, but that in reality no one of those who are blank, working legally, are all families who have two incomes and so the two incomes add up to more than the poverty line. When a union leader says that, one is clear about what the presence of the surplus working population means.

Fernando [Chat]: Below the poverty line that is not including rent.

JIC: Yes, it is a poverty line that does not include the rent of the house, which presupposes that the family that does not have enough to eat does have their own home. A condition that in a historical period of Argentina, with more or less precariousness, could be taken as not universal by any means, but that could appear widespread and that today is not. After 25-30 years of this situation, it is no longer the present situation, and in addition a precarious building has just collapsed where there were a number of families renting or sharing that housing that shows how far the working population is from having their own home.

I take the other example at the University of Buenos Aires and I think it is common to the historical universities of Argentina. New colleges have a much larger budget per student than traditional colleges. And the situation is: 60 years ago there was no such figure as we talked about last time of ad *honorem* teachers, not paid. Now they are, in the case of the faculties of economic sciences, a little while ago, they were 50% of the professors. That shows how the teachers, who also had the salary of a federal judge, the incumbents (now I'm an ad *honorem* incumbent, so I can compare myself to that), shows how the professors have become a surplus working population and how the students who attend those universities are part of the surplus working population, not only because they have the double situation of having to already be selling their labor power and also producing their future labor power; If this mass of teachers' labor force were not available for free or sold well below its value, the university would not be able to sustain the process of training the number of students it has. Therefore, what they are showing of this is that capital in Argentina needs workers who have gone through university education – that the number of workers is growing – but one of the bases is that these workers have paid for their own production as workers with developed productive attributes or that teachers have sustained that production at the expense of the conditions of sale of their labor power.

I make it clear that private universities, I suppose that except for some and for some teachers, are worse than public universities, have more precarious conditions for hiring their teachers than the University of Buenos Aires. But this is an expression of the multiplication of that population that is consolidating itself in the condition of surplus that no longer has labor power to sell. Ideologically, this is going to be reflected in the fact that the relationship of solidarity within the working class between the working population that sells its labor power – in whatever conditions, just below value – and that which is consolidated in the condition of surplus and that cannot sell its labor power, has an increasingly manifestly antagonistic character. Where, in part, because of what Marx says about capital taking off the weight of the surplus working population and unloading it on the working class, then what appears is the image of: the part of the working class that sells its labor power clearly below value and that pays taxes, not the income tax but the tax such as the VAT, which are vehicles of the fall in the price of labor power more below the value, "Tell this one who does not work and is paid that I work in these conditions to earn pittance and it turns out that I have to support this bunch of lazy people who do not work." And that is playing a significant

political role in Argentina and in the future that awaits us soon. But these are the forms that the development of this surplus population is taking.

I don't know if it's worth raising more, I don't know, this, Edgardo, Pedro, Javiera and Xatan, if they want to raise things about their national spaces... […] So, we move on. That today I remembered in the other workshop that we have this one and at most 5 more meetings, because on May 31 I promised Tomás that the workshop was finished, so we are going to continue advancing. Something else was missing, which is the liquidation of that surplus working population. Indeed, references to forms had appeared.

Wars are forms of annihilation of the surplus working population, something that historically had this character in military confrontations between more or less equivalent or comparable national processes of accumulation. The example was among European countries, where the struggle was for the expansion of the internal market, who expanded the space for their capital to accumulate and have the necessary scale to fully develop their powers. And what happens after the 2nd World War, where the wars have a strongly asymmetrical character (the current one between Ukraine and Russia has a particularity that never existed before), but which are very markedly between the state of a national process of capital accumulation where accumulation is expanding and a national process of capital accumulation where what had historically been generated were masses of latent surplus population. This is the case of the Korean War; this is the case of the Vietnam War; this is the case, with a difference, in the Iraq War, because oil is involved; this is the case in Afghanistan... This is the case of a series of war processes in Africa; in Latin America some appear like this, there are even some from an earlier historical stage... Where there is a very great asymmetry in what the liquidation of population means, it does not matter what they are, because that of one is counted at most in hundreds of thousands, and that of the other is counted in millions; the case of the Vietnam War and Iraq are the crudest expressions of this.

So, there are processes of annihilation of the surplus working population that revolve around competition to occupy a space of capital accumulation because there is a natural condition, a natural means of production that is of particular interest, as is the case with oil. There are wars between latent or consolidated surplus populations by which survives, and which is the case of the historical example is the case of the confrontation between the Hutus and the Tutsis in Rwanda, which is masses of latent surplus working population that stab each other, if I remember correctly there are 800,000 dead in that confrontation.

Diseases that are chronic, when medicines can be accessed, that implies a workforce that is being sold under certain conditions, which are acute diseases in territories where there is no possibility of having medicines (as is the case with AIDS). Involuntary sterilization processes, particularly of women, which I understand in the case of Peru is one of the most marked examples of this. And I always put this in these terms: what clearer proof that limiting the expansion of that surplus working population is a necessity of capital, than the fact that it is the World Bank that manages the birth control programs? And when one looks at a

bank managing a process of human biological reproduction, it is clear that it is the expression of the needs of capital; Then, when there is too much to spare, capital begins to put a limit on it.

And an example of this that I had forgotten to raise appeared very clearly in the war in Iraq and is now appearing in Ukraine. [...] In the Iraq War, the U.S. Army recruited citizens of Latin American countries, members of the consolidated surplus population, with the promise that if they survived the war they would be given a *green card* and would be able to work legally in the United States. It is an army that is made up of surplus working people who are going to liquidate another surplus working population. And now, in Ukraine, mercenaries are everywhere, and except for unbalanced individuals, mercenaries come out of what Marx called the *Lumpenproletariat*, which is part of that population that is consolidated in its condition of surplus. Well, this, I don't know if you want to raise anything else.

Fernando: What is the particularity you see in the war in Ukraine, Juan? You said that it has a particularity.

JIC: That the one who could have the strongly asymmetrical relationship has a support from NATO that implies that he does not have the asymmetric force. Neither Vietnam, nor Afghanistan, nor Iraq, nor Korea at the time had a permanent flow of weapons, financing, sanctions to the other that limit the exercise of the asymmetric force it has; and the other feature is that on both sides it is full of surplus working population that joins as mercenaries. Which is an expression of the transformations of the capitalist mode of production, because one of the things that arose (let's put it that way) with the French Revolution and the condition of citizenship is the army of citizens, it replaces the mercenary army. It has a name, too... And that is the army typical of the capitalist mode of production until these last wars, which were expressed in compulsory military service for men – for issues related to the forms of war and others, and the reproduction of the population. But that's it: it's an obligation as a citizen. And we have already seen that the relation of citizenship is this condition of personification of the unity of the movement of the total capital of society. And the armies of citizens disappear, when masses of surplus working population are developed throughout the world. I think there are still places with armies of citizens, but armies appear... Argentina has a mercenary army, in the sense of... He is a salesman of labor force incorporated into the Army, he is not incorporated because he is a citizen.

Fernando: Maybe there seems to me to be a point... I see it as an expression of the new International Division of Labor, where areas with a stagnant, consolidated or even latent surplus working population, one of the flows of that surplus working population is to feed the war machine of these countries; But it seems to me that a part of the army, especially the officers, was always professional and salaried.

JIC: Yes, but it does not appear under the figure of the mercenary. It's not a business. Now it's a business. Notice that what appears ideologically is an affirmation of the condition of a citizen who is willing to sacrifice himself for the country. I make a clarification: when there was compulsory military service, the conscripts received absolute pittance, but not in terms of payment for the service,

but it is: well, since you are incorporated here and you have consumption needs beyond those that are supplied by the organization itself (because theoretically clothes, food, housing, all that was supplied), So you don't have a salary, the country gives you something so that you can satisfy other needs. But it is different, because that condition is patriotic.

Fernando: No, that's why, that's why it seems to me that there was the conscript, which is that situation that you say; there is the officership, which is the professional military career, which is a salaried condition, which appeared and I understand that it continues to appear in the form that it is a service to the country, and then what we have now is directly private military forces, mercenaries hired by the countries, where they have their own professional officers of all salaried employees, where the figure of service to the homeland has already disappeared but because there is no specific homeland they serve, let's say, it is a private army.

JIC: The only homeland it serves is money, exactly. I think that also in part the technology of war implied changes in what kind of individual is needed to... If you need a massive army or you need an army with more developed professional skills. Xatan, did you want to intervene?

Xatan: I can speak a little, but what I wanted to say was that, if I'm not mistaken, both in Ukraine and in Russia, there have been calls to arms by the government, that is: there is compulsory conscription, beyond those mercenaries that have been talked about; it is very present because of the conflict that is going on in Bakhmut right now, because they are the main forces that are there. I have colleagues in Russia who tell me that they have had to not escape the country, but that they have to hide, because from a certain age they are forced to join the army, it is not voluntary. And on the other hand, for example, we have also seen in Russia the recruitment of personnel who are in prison. When before there was talk of the issue of the *Lumpenproletariat*, there it is even more transparent how capital, the surplus working class that is in jail or that does not function with society, is recruited for the army with the promise of forgiveness of its own sentence, even if it is later in cannon fodder.

JIC: That last one, the compulsory conscription, yes, but I didn't know that the last one, that they were recruiting...

Xatan: Yes, they are taking soldiers out of prisons. There are videos and such... I think this is not something unique to this war, but I think it is done in general, but it happens that in Russia, if I am not mistaken, several people who are in prisons, who are with general sentences of life imprisonment, are promised to pardon their sentences if they go to the army.

JIC: Okay. With this, we continue, because here now comes what Marx is going to propose as the general law of capitalist accumulation. Do you not want to propose something more of all this, in concrete ways? Then we're not going to sleep tonight, if we continue with these perspectives [laughs].

5. Illustration of the General Law of Capitalist Accumulation

Let us then go to what Marx continues to develop. It has all these expressions of the working class as an attribute of capital, and this that I think I have already mentioned, when it is the working class that has in its hands the effective management of capital and the development of accumulation on the basis of the production of relative surplus value, therefore the development of machinery, which at the same time is the development of the productive forces and therefore it is the development of the human potentiality to reproduce itself and it is the affirmation of this human genetic being, the capitalist form that it has encloses the last thing that I was saying, of a working population that even tears away the generically human attribute that is the capacity to work.

And then, Marx, what has been advancing in development several times? The more accumulation develops, the more it multiplies, the more the mass of capital grows, the more the mass of the proletariat grows, the more the productivity of labor grows, the more the industrial reserve army grows. The same thing that makes capital expand, it makes the labor force that is at the disposal of capital expand and then the industrial reserve army grows, and the more the population grows — this is where Marx uses the term — consolidated, which says that in order to sustain itself, its work is in more and more brutal conditions, and it has less and less possibility of sustaining itself with that work.

And then, what follows is: the more this misery grows, this part of the working class that is fallen into misery, the more "official pauperism" also grows, which is this: there is no longer labor power to sell, the state, since they are individuals who are still alive, has to support the reproduction of the natural life of this population. And he says: this is the absolute general law of the capitalist combination, which – he is going to say – is not imposed in a simple, immediate way, but is imposed through movements that can imply that the surplus population suddenly decreases and he says that we are not going to analyze them here. So, we have the proposal of this general law, it says that it is absolute of capitalist accumulation, it is the growth, the multiplication of the surplus working population.

And then, the criticism that Marx is going to deploy is to the ideologues of capital, to the economic savants, who say that in reality the existence of this growing surplus population is the fault of the workers who do not adjust, do not adjust their growth to the needs that capital has to the demand for labor power. *What capital always* needs is that surplus working population, that reserve army, and then there is an ever-larger part of the active industrial army, that is, of the working class that is selling its labor power, and an ever-increasing number of the working population that is falling into pauperism.

Fernando: I didn't understand, Juan, to whom that criticism was directed at that moment.

JIC: It goes from Malthus' proposals, to... I don't remember if it has particular subjects named, but it is this: it is the conception that the fall into poverty is because they have too many children, this population grows too much. That is why

the problem is: they should have fewer children to adjust to the demand for labor force; and capital, first, always needs that there be this relative overpopulation of workers, and it also feeds its valorization with a mass of this population that cannot sell its labor power. And the discourse is constantly appearing of: they have to control themselves, they have to control themselves, they have to... They don't want to work, it's the fault of the working population.

Fernando: Even that argument appears explicitly in Smith and Ricardo, because what appears to them is that if wages fall, population increase must fall, it discourages the increase in the working population.

JIC: What happens is that Ricardo's argument is with Malthus. There is a general development, but Malthus is the one who appears as the one who proposes that the population grows in geometric progression and food grows in arithmetic progression, and that then the workers should have a birth rate that at the same time is increasing and that because of this food is not enough, they become more expensive and... well, Malthus is never going to use the expression, but the real wage is getting lower and lower, and if the workers had fewer children, then there would not be as much demand for food, worse land would not be put into production, and they would have cheaper food. I don't know if it's Malthus's argument, but I mean, what underlies that argument in the discussion with Ricardo is this kind of approach.

[...] So, the synthesis he is going to make is that the working population always grows faster than what capital needs to explode *under normal conditions*. And then it is a synthesis of what we have been seeing with respect to what happens to the productive attributes of the worker, what happens to the productive subjectivity of the worker as the ways of increasing the productivity of labor governed by the production of relative surplus value are developed. And then what is going to appear is: the individual worker is losing these attributes; Every technical improvement, everything that develops the productivity of labor, from the point of view of the worker is presented as the intensification of the exploitation and enslavement of the worker, they turn him into a fragmentary individual — he does more and more partial work — they turn him into an appendage of machinery, they empty his labor of all content. What appeared: if the worker, the direct producer, had control over his individual labor, now all those spiritual powers—they are placed here—of the labor process are incorporated into science, and science, in what Marx proposes, confronts the workers as an independent power. They deteriorate all working conditions, extend the working day, all the hours of life of the workers are working hours... Here expressions of the time appear, because it says: they throw their wives and their children under the crushing wheels of capital, where a situation is implicit in which women would not be sellers of labor power, it is taken as a situation in which women are converted into sellers of labor power as a process, let's call it, purely negative. And so all these forms that occur from the point of view or from the pole of the workers are multiplications of the accumulation of capital. And here an observation is going to appear.

The observation he is going to make is that it does not matter, he says: all these conditions are going to worsen the situation of the worker. It must *necessarily*, he says, worsen the worker's situation as accumulation develops, no matter how much the wage is, whether high or low. And here what appears is all those conditions that appeared before entailed a decrease in the value of labor power. What is it that the remuneration is "high" or "low", but in particular what is it that it is high? And this appears as a clarification that does not end up closing with the previous development. And then he says: the same law that maintains the surplus population, keeps the active worker tied to capital, because the competition not to fall into the condition of surplus forces him to submit absolutely to capital. And then, the synthesis that he is going to put is: this law that appeared before, is an accumulation of misery – that was already seen – and at the same time it is an accumulation at the pole of capital. At one pole there is the accumulation of wealth and at the other pole the producers themselves, whose product has the form of capital, what there is is an accumulation of misery, of torments of work, of slavery, of despotism, of ignorance and moral degradation. So, this is the point at which Marx arrives with the full development of what he has been proposing about the accumulation of capital. And he is going to synthesize it as this general law of accumulation.

[...] I make an observation: here is the fullness of capital as the concrete subject of the process of social life synthesized in this general law of capitalist accumulation. And during a historical period, in particular with views that were restricted to some countries in Europe or the United States, they affirmed that this was false, because where the capitalist mode of production developed, which were these national spaces, the surplus working population disappeared because unemployment rates were low and because there was a manifest growth. The value of labor power was never discussed, but real wages were. And that the accumulation of capital, far from leading to this general law of misery, brutalization, etc., that what happened to national spaces where these conditions were not verified and this general law of capitalist accumulation seemed to be imposed, was the other way around, that poverty was caused by the insufficient development of the capitalist mode of production. Then, all the theories of development and underdevelopment that enclose this type of inversion appear.

When one looked at the world unity of capital accumulation at that time, what was in front of one was that if, on the one hand, there were indeed workers who were developing their productive attributes, their condition as subjects of the material process of production, who had a shortening of the working day due to the increase in intensity, etc., and there was relatively, comparatively, little surplus working population (beyond the fact that these were national spaces that had just come out of the 2nd World War, and shortly before that there had been the 1st World War, so there had been strong reductions in the working population), when one looked at world unity, one saw that along with that, in the rest of the world, what was developing were masses of latent surplus population. And in the mid-70s, at the beginning of the 80s, is where two movements are manifested, which is the use of a part of that latent surplus population as a new labor force in extremely cheap conditions for capital, and in the national spaces where the fantasy had developed that the surplus population no longer exists and the law of capitalist

accumulation is The general law of capital accumulation is false, now the consolidated surplus population abounds. This is what one can look at in this sense with what Marx is saying: well, this is a general law, it imposes itself through a whole series of concrete forms that are complex, that are diverse, that fluctuate, but that above all one has to look at the world unity of that movement of accumulation in order to recognize the general movement. I don't know if they want to raise something.

Edgardo: Juan, yes, I just wanted to say a brief comment. I also don't know if what Marx is proposing here [...] also gives rise to all these ideas that arose already in the twentieth century from the pauperism of the working class, the theses of underconsumption, and that in fact this was the foundation, let's say, of the revolutionary subjectivity of the working class. Because, let's say, there are indicators that improve as time goes by, so that's what we say generates doubts in me.

JIC: There are several things here. Well, with pauperism as a revolutionary subject, let's leave it for the penultimate chapter, the chapter that follows, because it is the historical character of the capitalist mode of production. It does seem to me that at this point it is worth pointing out, I don't know if in Mexico it was raised so openly, but that of marginality, that it is a population that is already on the margins of the movement of capital, that capital has too much and is no longer useful for anything and that it is no longer a relative overpopulation, they are not surplus working people, but have been expelled from the capitalist mode of production and are on the margins of the capitalist mode of production. My proposal is: they are not on the margins of the capitalist mode of production, it is the capitalist mode of production that determines them as surpluses; they are outside the process of social production in that they can participate in that process under normal conditions, but they are not outside the capitalist mode of production.

Now, with respect to the other thing you were proposing, at least I associate it with this, here Marx is looking at a degradation of the productive attributes of the working class, especially the individual ones, which is the image with which he closes development. And we, when we stopped to look, what one finds is that, if all these conditions appear for part of the working population, another part of the working population is not free to fall into these conditions, but that capital needs it by reproducing itself in normal conditions; and that these normal conditions presuppose a longer natural life, a longer educational process, the consumption of a greater quantity of use-values... all according to the needs of capital. But that subject does not appear in Marx's development, which later, when we continue advancing, we can look at what it is that one can speculate about why it does not appear but could have appeared.

So, this on the one hand. The other thing about the improvement indicators, which is the World Bank's calculation, one of the indicators is what part of the world's population lived on less than one dollar a day, what part on less than two

dollars; Now I've found that they moved it to five dollars. I don't know if you meant this as "improvement."

Edgardo: Yes, yes. It's just that, it's just that many... more than anything social networks, I don't know, libertarians, etc., very vulgar expressions, which precisely "refute" Marx by saying: but look at all these indicators, Marx was wrong. That's why I say it, more than anything.

JIC: This is still said. This was what looking at the countries of Western Europe and the case of the United States, was what in the decades of the 50s, 60s, 70s, it was said that this was the example and they did not look at the other side, or it appeared inverted as an effect of underdevelopment (these indices of improvement did not appear because the surplus population is multiplying rapidly). One of the misleading aspects of these claims that extreme poverty rates have now improved, which used to be $1/day... But I wanted to make this clarification: it is $1/day in the US, it is the basket that in the US can be bought with $1, it is not what $1 buys in each of the countries. And also, as I think this must have started, if not in the 50s, by the 60s, around there, and 1$ from that time to today there is an abyss of difference in purchasing power, they were adjusting it; that they kept saying "less than $1", but it was no longer $1, at one point it was $1.80, something like that, and I guess that this "$5" thing must now be the update of that purchasing power.

I looked at a more or less updated statistic that spoke of $5, that half of the world's population lives on less than $5/day. And then I started looking at how much a Big Mac costs in the US, and it costs $5.50. That's all half of the population, 47%... Extreme poverty decreased, but it increased because the world population grows, so a smaller proportion is in extreme poverty, but a larger mass of this poverty that is considered the level of hunger, something like that. $5 means this, and that's all the income that that part of the population has, with which... And there is a setback in a series of indices, part of which is attributed to the pandemic, and the question is what will happen when this thing that is always about to take place takes place – for now it is not materialised, but it is progressing gradually – which is automation already fully expanded through artificial intelligence. There are estimates, I do not remember now, of the number of workers who are going to be left over in the different branches of production: what is going to happen to the mass of surplus population? Because it's one of those moments when there would be an explosion.

So, when the development of technical conditions implied that a whole series of production processes were taken out of countries where until then they were carried out with relatively expensive labor to take them to places with extremely cheap labor power, that was a phase. That phase corresponded to the increase in the surplus population in the countries originally without greater – apparently – surplus population, but an increase in employment in what was the latent surplus population, very much in situations of acute misery, and that is why the indicators of acute misery improve. What will happen when part of that population, which is extremely cheap, also leaves the production process via automation, and also the population that does the most complex work becomes surplus due to this

development? If this poverty reduction is not going to be reversed in one pole... No one doubts the increase in wealth at the other pole, because more and more this Piketty thing appears, that 1% of the world's population has 90% of the wealth, but there is no doubt that wealth is accumulating at one pole.

So, all this contains a movement that, in my opinion, is missing in Marx's proposal, which is the movement towards the scientific organization of work in the capitalist mode of production as an attribute of the working class. So far, in what we see of Marx, he is alien, he is external. It is not clear who the subject is: it is not the capitalist class, but neither is it who is the subject of the development of science. And then, when one looks at the part of the working population that has been increasingly transforming the conditions of sale of labor power because the materiality of their labor has changed, that did not appear here. So, one has to subject Marx's proposal to criticism, to see if it is indeed simply so, if it has much more complex forms... That discussion remains open.

Now: the abstract claims that poverty has decreased... Today, precisely, for tomorrow, I was rereading *Wages, Price and Profit* and I found myself in this sentence that says: economists or I don't know what, who put the positive evolution, the relative evolution of the salary, but they do not put the absolute of the salary. And it reminded me of a congress I was at, that there was a group of Chinese economists that that was what they presented. They said, "You can't accuse the Chinese economy of competing on the basis of low wages," and they showed a graph in which, compared (I think) with the American wage, the Chinese wage had risen enormously more. But the problem is that the Chinese salary started from a level that was much lower than the American salary with which they were comparing. So, I remembered this, now it resurfaced me, but all these complex movements appear.

To what extent is this mass of surplus population stagnant in a state of consolidation...? That everything looks like it would multiply, unless the productivity of labor grows so much that there is an expansion of social production in general, and that expansion of social production absorbs a mass of living labor power... Unless one looks at that, the surplus population is multiplying, misery is multiplying universally. Places appear where they do not, and they are significant, which is the case of China, now it is assumed that of India, but it does not seem to reduce the mass of surplus population in conditions of misery in absolute terms. So the question is what capital is going to do with that mass of surplus population that hinders its valorization. In Argentina it is so clear that it hinders the valorization that it is so important that... I say: the accumulation of capital in Argentina is all sustained by surplus working population, but there is a part that is so surplus that even if it pays below value it cannot be used, and it is beginning to become openly evident that this hinders the movement of capital: these must be liquidated. And from the point of view of the political action of the working class, this contradiction appears: among the active workers, what Marx calls the "active army", which competes for the sale of its labor power in these precarious conditions with the surplus working population, to what extent is the active workers' army not going to demand the liquidation of this surplus population? The "softest" way—it is ironic—is the reduction of subsidies and plans, which means more misery, more

acute; and there are other proposals that seem to point to how that population is physically liquidated as quickly as possible. But hey, they're what we have in front of us. I don't know, Edgardo, if you wanted to raise anything else.

Edgardo: No, no, everything is fine.

JIC: Well, what follows in the chapter, which is very long, is the concrete manifestation of how this process is developing. And what Marx is going to propose is that England is the area where all the forms of the capitalist mode of production are most developed, and so this is the place to go to look at the concrete forms of this movement. And then it is going to take that case and it is going to unfold it. My proposal, which is the one I always made in the workshops, is, unless you want to see a particular aspect, is to read this but not stop at the workshop on development, in a reading that asks about this thing that we were seeing recently, to what extent there are forms that continue to exist and there are forms that do not exist. I don't have it written down here, but if I remember correctly, somewhere in the development of this chapter Marx makes some reference to the class struggle; but in a general way the proposal this, and then enter the chapter of primitive accumulation, I do not know what you think. I want to see the class struggle, but I don't remember where it is.

[...] Do we do this or do we start with the chapter of primitive accumulation? [...] In any case, a synthesis meeting of the workshop always makes sense, which goes beyond the development of what is appearing. And I want to ask you, precisely, in contrast to this worker, what happens if one looks at the development that Marx makes in the chapter on primitive accumulation, putting into play what we saw regarding the transformation of the materiality of the workers' work; the development of science, both with respect to the control over natural forces and with respect to the movement of the unity of social production and consumption, what happens if we look at this same development by adding that. So I think that we will be able to end the workshop in May. See you next Wednesday.

Edgardo: Also for this last chapter...

JIC: Sorry, Edgardo, because it's my fault: it's not the last chapter, it's the second to last. I always say, "This is the last one" and then I remember that there is "The Modern Theory of Colonization." But after one has passed through the second to last, that one has a much more limited scope; it is, seen where the capitalist mode of production is heading, how it is moving towards its overcoming, how the "resurgence" of independent commodity production, in the agricultural colonies, is not... If here it is that (I don't want to give it too much, but hey) how the capitalist mode of production arose from the production of simple commodities, how from the capitalist mode of production arises the simple production of commodities. That was the theory of colonization: the ideological fantasy of this "resurgence" of production by independent private producers through the programs of agricultural colonies... Marx looks at it in the United States, in Australia, and says: what appears there is not realizing where the same thing that appears there is going tomorrow. But then, it is a chapter that may have some validity with respect to what you were saying, Edgardo, what we talked about the other time, the image

of who the revolutionary subject is; not because of the resurgence of the commodity producer, but because he appears as if he were a simple commodity producer. But maybe that chapter always ends up being mistreated in the workshop to give priority to the previous one [Laughs]. See you next Wednesday.

Chapter XXIV. The so-called primitive accumulation.

1. The secret of primitive cumulation.

Is there anything of everything we have been seeing from the "General Law of Capitalist Accumulation" to return to or do we already move on to original accumulation? Let's go to primitive accumulation. What is going to appear here? One has to look at the way Marx has been doing the development in the previous section, of capital accumulation. When he is looking at accumulation, what appears is what is happening with the movement of the total capital of society; in production it has deployed all the concrete forms reaching the development of "Machinery and large industry", in the terms that Marx is going to present it, which encloses that the worker, the working class is not the subject of scientific production nor is it the subject of technological development. Science appears as something alien, a power that is alien, that even deprives the worker of what he had left, of intervention, of his subjectivity in the production process, and what appears is the worker converted into an appendage of machinery, with more and more simplified work, etc. Then, the development or transformation of the materiality of work appears through the system of machinery, where what plays a central role is science and technology, and the workers do not appear as subjects of the production of that science and technology, so what they have to do with the transformation in the materiality of their work is to control the machinery. they no longer handle the tool, they are standing on the side of where production flows, their function is to control the machinery, clean the machinery, etc. These maintenance workers are going to appear, who Marx says have a mixture of scientific knowledge with skill with manual work, craftsmanship. So, first this appears. I want to emphasize this because we, in the development that we did after having accompanied Marx's development, we saw the complete transformation in the materiality of work.

When one goes, then, on these bases, and what one looks at is the movement of the total capital of society, in the movement of reproduction on an enlarged scale, as in essence it is what qualitative changes are occurring through this quantitative multiplication of capital, what results, what remains of this movement of reproduction of capital, it is that it has no limit, that it has no end, that it can always go beyond itself. And so, in the face of the way in which the exhibition has been developing, what Marx is going to propose is: well, if one looks at it in what was being looked at there, the capitalist mode of production, the accumulation of capital, is reproduced indefinitely. Capital begets surplus value, surplus value begets capital, and it seems that there is no point of overcoming this movement. And so, what he is going to propose is: well, if we are facing a movement that has this character, what we have to do is look for the starting point *before* this process of reproduction. That is, capital was once not accumulated surplus-value, because capital had never been set in motion. And consequently, what we have to go for is that point where capital did not produce itself, but is the starting point of the capitalist mode of production. And he is going to refer to this as the process of the *original accumulation* of capital.

And the chapter has a title that is not "Primitive accumulation": the title of the chapter is "The so-called original accumulation". Why does he call it "called original accumulation"? Because what is going to appear is the myth of the origin of the capitalist mode of production which, at the time, was called "the origin of accumulation", "primitive accumulation". And then, the first thing he is going to pose is the *myth of primitive accumulation*, and that is: where did the capitalist mode of production come from? In ancient times, the human population was divided into two types of individuals: a hardworking, intelligent and saving minority; and a majority of lazy, wasteful people; and that then, from the former descend the capitalists, and from the latter descend the workers. And he has an irony contrasting the original sin of the Christian religion, of "you shall earn your bread by the sweat of your brow," with this original sin that has freed, he says, some individuals from the need to sweat in order to eat. [...] What he is proposing is: well, those who were lazy and wasteful were left with nothing but their labor power to sell, and on the other hand, those who saved and were hardworking and intelligent, freed themselves and their successors, became owners of the means of production and are freed from the need to work. I am going to dwell on one thing that seems to me to be worthwhile, which is what economics says, how the neoclassical school explains, which is implicit in the explanation of the neoclassical school, with respect to why there are workers and why capitalists. Because it is exactly, put with pseudoscientific foundation, this myth.

Neoclassical economics says that, I think I mentioned it the other time, that every human individual is not born with a loaf of bread under his arm, but that he is born with a good, which is leisure. And since he has a lot of that good, but he has no other good, the marginal utility of that good is very low, and he is going to change it, he has to sacrifice a part of leisure by working to have an income. He who does not sacrifice his leisure, then, lives in misery, he has nothing to eat because he is not willing to sacrifice his leisure. And then, at the origin of the history of humanity, the vast majority that Marx proposes, chose to stay with leisure and today they have no choice but, instead of disposing of leisure, sacrifice it and work. What happened to the other part of the population? What is the capitalist? The capitalist is an individual who, instead of enjoying his leisure, worked and sacrificed himself and did not consume, which is literally what Marx puts there in the reference. Before the explanation was that he "abstained" from consuming, now ("now" is throughout the century since 1918, I think it's Marshall's book) is that he waited to consume, and that as the marginal utility that commodities have as time passes, if one has the good and time passes, it is decreasing, to compensate for that decrease, it has to receive interest, which is compensation for the sacrifice of utility that it made. And one of the things that Samuelson, Nobel Prize in Economics and head of neoclassical economics for a long time, is going to say was that the rough and primitive state of society was a society with a very high interest rate because time was very scarce. Then, since those who sacrificed themselves in that rude and primitive state obtained a very high rate of interest, that is why accumulation was also accelerated. So, this myth is what, not put as a myth, but as the concepts from which one must start, students of economics universally learn.

When must the difference between capitalists and workers be justified historically? Well, let's look at what Marx proposes. It has a reference to the question of property. He names Thiers as the cultist of this fantasy; And what he is going to say from the outset is that, in the real history of that primitive accumulation, "[...] conquest, enslavement, robbery, and murder; violence, in a word."[323] And on the other hand, in political economy what appears is this idyllic process, where he presents the irony by saying that from the first moment he saw "the law and the 'work'" he says, "always excepting, of course, 'the current year'", [324]where everything is justified and the work has the characteristics that we have been seeing. And so, what he is going to propose is that the forms that primitive accumulation took are the opposite of a process of an idyllic nature.

Now, I propose that you do this (we can do some part and part). The development that Marx is going to make is to look at a whole series of concrete manifestations of this process of primitive accumulation, of the exercise of violence on entire populations, forced labor, as opposed to free labor, the annihilation of populations in which (I make the observation from the outset) he will refer several times to the role played by the conquest of America. and of what is now known as Latin America, in the process of primitive accumulation. And the synthesis of this movement is how one starts from a society in which what essentially governs are the relations of personal dependence, and how these relations of personal dependence are violently being carried out... The very starting point is the relations of personal dependence, but how these relations of personal dependence are dissolved and become the commodity relation, the relationship of wage labor and capital. So, we start from modes of production where what governs is the direct organization of the process of social metabolism, and we move on to the origin of a mode of production where what governs is the indirect organization of social labor governed by capital. And how (I want to emphasize this) these direct relations are the bearers of the development of capital. It is not that they have simply been replaced all at once, but how the management of the subjects who carry these direct relations engenders this whole indirect mode of organization of social life.

So, it has all the development very carefully, in particular about England, but it also has references to a whole series of other processes. And here there is a whole series of discussions, particularly among Marxist historians, where if the rapprochements that you are going to refer to England existed in this other place, or they existed in that other place, or in reality it is not so because there were no rapprochements... The concrete forms of this movement are diverse, multiple. What I am going to propose to you on the basis of this are two possibilities that are linked. One is that, unless you want to look at some particular concrete aspect, or the development of the historical process, we would not stop at that historical process: we would go to what in my opinion is the content that Marx is going to show that this historical process contains. An intermediate alternative is that we stop to look very hard at this historical process of genesis of the capitalist mode of production in America; what Marx proposes as *the conquest*, but if we do that I can summarize it in a very, very general way, that I know it in particular because of

[323] Marx, K. (1977: 607), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[324] Ibid.

Argentina, because of the historical origin of the genesis of this national space, the accumulation of capital that encompassed other territories that are not currently part of Argentina. So at least some of you are going to know much more concrete aspects of what I can go through about your own national space.

First question: do we need to go through all the development that Marx makes, historical, of "here this happened, here this happened...", etc., or just as we do not look at the general law of capitalist accumulation in the manifestations, let us take this whole process for granted (that is the first question)? The second, the alternative, is that there are specific points that they want to discuss, that they want to raise and see what we have in front of us.

Randy: For me, let's get to the content, let's not stop at the historical manifestations.

Edgardo: I was interested in the intermediate alternative.

JIC: Let's do the intermediate one very quickly.

Edgardo: Anyway, let the others decide, because I have to leave in five minutes. So I can't...

JIC: The intermediate one, without detail, is going to last ten minutes or something like that [laughs], but hey.

Edgardo: No, if the others want to go directly to the content, that's fine.

JIC: Let the others say, then.

Iván: In general I always prefer long roads, but I also have to leave in 20 minutes, so... I'm going to run out of bread and cake [Laughs].

JIC: [Laughs] Well, we have Alejo and Javiera. If not, let me indulge myself and I'll figure out the middle way. Maybe that will give rise to a lot of discussions and next Wednesday we will be in the intensity. So, I'm going to do that, by the way, I'm getting into the subject.

When one looks at the emergence, the origin of the capitalist mode of production in America, what one has as a starting point is... I'm going to take it like this: in America, *two types of societies appear roughly*. In the areas, in the regions where cultivation can only be done under irrigation on a large scale, what appears, as in other parts of the world, are what are called the "empires of antiquity": empires with estate structures of personal dependence, with centralized organization of irrigation, with centralized organization of production processes... With all the brutality – I make the clarification because there are authors who erase it – typical of relationships of personal dependence. Nor were they abstractly idyllic societies, they have the features that correspond to that mode of production with centralized irrigation. And these are the Mayan, Aztec and Inca Empires.

Edgardo: Excuse me, what would be the condition?

JIC: That there is cultivation under irrigation in general done on a large scale.

Edgardo: But is this due to certain geographical conditions?

JIC: They are mountain territories, with water flows, important water sources, where it is cultivated in the valleys, and requires all the technical development of terrace cultivation or systematized cultivation. It's the same kind of organization that is found... The classic figure is Egypt, in Mesopotamia; on a much smaller scale in classical Greece, but there is already a very fragmented unity, there is no longer a central unity; in China... They are societies that have this structure of a strongly hierarchical, estate-based character, and with centralized organization of social production. I don't know if this is what you're doing...

Edgardo: Yes, but I don't see the relationship between the existence of these geographical conditions and the fact that they are organized in this way, that they are fairly centralized societies.

JIC: Irrigation management, first, needs to set in motion masses of work. First you have to do the irrigation works, you have to do the development of irrigation, you have to put into operation large masses of work, organized with a degree of knowledge that goes far beyond what the primitive community, even the most developed primitive community, can produce.

I make the contrast to see if this is clearer: roughly, in the rest of America, what there are are communities of hunters and gatherers, of rainfed farmers or irrigated farmers, but not on a large scale. I know more about the Inca Empire, where there is this strongly centralized structure of the organization of social production because the crops are on terraces, the water has to be channeled, and then there cannot be small independent units of production: they need to be coordinated, they need the development of this... What structure do these societies have? They have a class of priests, a caste (depends on...) who are in charge of the organization of social labor, they are the ones who govern and are the bearers of the knowledge for the management of irrigation; a massive class of peasants who are the ones who carry out the work immediately. And since there is an antagonistic relationship, because here there is a mutilation of individual productive forces – on both sides; that of the priests is less painful than that of the peasants, where the direct producer lost the ability to control the general organization of his work. So, there is an antagonistic relationship, and there are also antagonistic relationships between communities. There is another class that is the military that is in charge of the exercise of internal coercion and armed confrontation to the outside, the expansion of the scope of the empire, subjecting to that organization other communities that have the same productive structure, but that until that moment, are in separate valleys, with separate rivers, The empire is advancing on these communities and turning them into communities that are tributary in work or tributaries in product.

So, in contrast to that, in the structure there is no empire comparable to these three, and you have to look at the fact that the bulk of the population is in areas of, outside of this... I say: the bulk of the population of America is in these three empires. The rest are highly dispersed in communities or organizations that have the structure basically of the primitive community; and that they have that: even when there is irrigation, irrigation is on a small scale, it is no longer that irrigation on a large scale; and it is linked to the condition... Human life is only possible in these mountain territories with irrigated cultivation; The same is true of deserts: the development of human life is only possible on the basis of this organization of production. I don't know, Edgardo, if...

Edgardo: Yes, yes, I think it's clearer.

JIC: You should be much clearer about Mexico, and it would be extremely interesting for you to raise it. I have more references about the Inca Empire, but about the other two I have a more diffuse image.

Edgardo: Yes... the truth is that I don't have much reference, but what I do know is that, at least, the Aztec Empire was based on a valley, not necessarily on mountains.

JIC: No, no, forgive me, all these communities are settled in mountain areas, in the valleys. But they are typical of mountain areas, cultivation is already done in the valleys, and it is also a very wide valley.

Edgardo: Yes, and that it was also a lake.

JIC: It was a lake, and already in the Aztec Empire that water began to be used and cultivation began to spread in what was previously the lake.

Edgardo: Yes, the chinampa, literally, the crop extends above the water. And yes, there were many sources of water for that very reason.

JIC: Of course. All this is the type of society that develops in areas that have these characteristics: The Andes, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, northern Chile and northern Argentina, which were part of the Inca empire, have the structure of terrace cultivation, irrigation management... One looks in America, both north and south, and no other society appears that has that structure. And when you look at the basis on which these other societies reproduce, the generality are hunter-gatherers, small-scale farmers—even irrigated—a lot of rainfed farmers, populations that are largely nomadic because they are hunter-gatherers, in contrast to these empires.

Edgardo: What is also happening in the rest of North America, in the United States.

JIC: Exactly. So, if we go back to the process of conquest, it appears to spring from a society in which relations of personal dependence prevail. I suppose that throughout America we have all passed through the school with the image of

Columbus going to see the Catholic Monarchs to ask them for permission to make their trip, and they grant him the favors to be able to advance on the territory. Also what one learns is that, since the exit to the east had been closed due to the advance of... the fall of Constantinople, he went out in search of new trade routes. Who appears as the active subject of this process? It is *commercial capital*, a primitive form – among the things that Marx is going to develop in this chapter on primitive accumulation – the first historical form (with the exceptions that this implies) of the development of capital, over industrial capital, and how only later does industrial capital subsume commercial capital. And the other subject of this process is *usurious capital*, it is the capital that lends at interest, and in that the Catholic Church plays a central role, which is going to finance the trip.

What happens to them when they arrive in America? First they arrive in the parts where there is this population of hunter-gatherers or small farmers. Oblivious to the exchange of commodities, there appears what Marx proposes in chapter II of Volume 1, where the historical genesis of money appears, where exchangeability does not depend on the amount of socially necessary abstract labor that has materialized privately in the product that is going to be exchanged, but depends on the will of the changers. But it is an asymmetrical will, because one of the exchangers already incipiently has his will as the personification of commodities, as the personification of capital, and consequently, in this, as the personification of money, and the others do not. And then, what appears is the exchange of knick-knacks for what they begin to find in these towns, which is gold.

From the point of view of these populations, gold is a use value that, due to its material attributes —again, what we saw in chapter II—, of shine, of resistance to oxidation... it plays a symbolic role in that society. In the Aztec Empire, as far as I know, gold did not function as money: what functioned as money was cocoa. Gold appears, then, due to its material attributes, assimilated to the divinity and the pyramidal structure of this empire where gold production is located, which is the Aztec Empire. And so, what commercial capital and usurious capital, which had gone out in search of markets to buy and sell, find, what they find is, what for that capital is the source of world money.

What is going to do to these societies? As these societies, in addition, have antagonistic relations with their neighbors, they will have the armed force of other native populations of America that have this antagonistic relationship. The legend is that Hernán Cortés conquered Mexico with 15 men, and it is clear that he defeated the Aztec Empire with a much larger military force. In any case, the military force that is already coming in the name of capital has weapons that do not exist in Aztec society. What is capital going to do in this space (the same is it going to do with the Inca empire)? It is not going to annihilate the native population because it needs it as a labor force to become... First, it plunders everything it can, and once there is no more to plunder, now it is necessary to put into production those gold mines, these sources of money for the world market—in the case of the Inca Empire it is, in particular, silver, but it is also gold—to produce this money directly. First it will defeat it militarily, it will also annihilate it through diseases that were unknown, the brutality of production, which goes from being the production of a use value to being the production of value; and we, when

we saw hoarding, also in chapter III, we said that the hoarder has no limit, and when the Spanish commercial capital, and now the centralized management of that movement, which is the Spanish crown, which is going to be a partner with 20% of what is extracted from gold and silver, corresponds to it by the bonds of personal dependence, Because it is the bearer of the political unity that sustains this movement, it is going to partially annihilate that population, massively, but it is still going to preserve it and transform it into a labor force for the extraction of gold and silver as world money and the production that must be done around it in order to sustain this production.

In contrast to the rest of the American territory, what you are going to find that commercial capital that is becoming industrial capital is that, in the first place, there is no money for the world market: there, if you want to access money, you have to produce commodities; that this production of commodities has the problem that it has to reach the market of origin of this capital. that it is England, it is Spain, it is France, etc., across the ocean, and that then, no matter how productive the work there is in America, we must compensate for the work that has to be done to transport it across the ocean, and only the regions that are closest to Europe will serve for the immediate production of commodities. And those two regions are the ~~western~~ [eastern[325]] coast of North America and the Brazilian northeast, which will allow us to produce, from products that until then did not exist for European societies; or products that did exist but that can be produced with extremely favorable natural conditions in these new territories.

And so, to put those territories into production, you need labor force, and what is found in capital is that, unlike what happens in the territories of empires, here there is no centralized organization of the population, there are small communities that do not have the discipline of collective work as there was in empires. and that, since they are immediately linked to what is their main means of production, which is the land, when they want to turn them into workers for this capital, what they do is to retreat, to move away, and consequently, what capital finds is that it needs to empty these territories of the original population, annihilating the original population, and bring in new workforces. And in this bringing in of new labor power, there is a particular expression, which among the things that Marx points out is, which is, especially in North America (I am excluding Mexico, which belongs to North America) in what is the United States (more than what Canada is, because Canada is even more difficult to occupy for the production of new commodities).

The emptying of the territory that is being done in the expansion, labor power must be brought in, and one of the ways of bringing labor power (in England this appears markedly) is, with the process that is occurring at the same time in England of enclosures, of the expulsion of the serfs and transformation of the serfs into what are called "transhumant masses" and the violent repression of these masses, It is to convert those individuals who are being expelled from the old servile relationship, or free peasants, into forced laborers for the new territories. And one of the ways in which this condition of forced labor has is to take prisoners

[325] Later it corrects itself.

—this is how the first occupation of Australia was done later, taking prisoners, forced laborers—; and it already existed, but the figure of debt bondage develops: direct producers who have been stripped of all means of production, development of usurious capital in England by transforming itself into capital lent at interest, they contract debts in order to be able to maintain themselves in production, they cannot maintain themselves, they become insolvent debtors and become servants until they pay the debt, a bond of personal dependence, and that servant is sent to the colonies in America.

When you look at what happens to these forced laborers, what appears is that they have two limitations for exploitation by capital. Because those who are going to put them to work are now incipient forms of industrial capital, who use forced labor power to valorize their capital by selling their commodity on the incipient world market – which, unfortunately, is mediated by the colonial structure, and then the Crown keeps a part of the value of their commodity. but which is already an immediate production of commodities for that market. But the problem that these individuals have is that they come from cold and temperate climates and have to work in tropical climates, and this makes them workers with limitations in their productive force.

And the second situation that occurs is that this forced laborer, who was often branded with fire, with iron, so that it would be clear that he was a forced laborer, if he manages to escape and moves north, in the north, the process of occupation of the territory, of expansion of the production of commodities, is having another form that is also based on the annihilation of the native population. but the emergence of small peasant production that is based on hunting and agriculture. And like all commodity production that responds to the general movement of capital, what happens to that population is that it quickly annihilates the fauna it has to hunt. While in previous societies with their relationships of bonds of personal dependence, the wild animal is a use value that is hunted in order to reproduce life, and that regulates what happens with the animal population, here, converted into a commodity production for commercial capitals that then centralize the trade in skins. animals are rapidly being annihilated, and then it is a population that needs to move permanently into new territories. And well, if the servant escaped from the plantation in the south and was able to move to this area of production, he has the possibility of becoming an independent producer of commodities, occupying a territory, annihilating the native population, and through agriculture and hunting, then selling the skins.

And agriculture is basically for subsistence, rather than for grain production. The production of whiskey is developed in that territory very strongly because it is the way to conserve calories for when the hunting season comes, converting sugar into alcohol, it is a food that provides carbohydrates, it is linked to it. So, that capital incipiently, in particular the capital of plantation crops, goes out to look for another source of labor force that does not have this double limitation that it could get in Europe. And that source of labor power is the communities of hunter-gatherers, of small-scale farmers in Africa, where it is a population that comes from a tropical climate, that separated from its main means of production, which is the land, has no alternative to reproduce than to work as a forced laborer on the

plantation, that if it tries to escape, he finds that what there is of the native population he sees as an invader, and that if he wants to go where the free peasants are, it is enough to look at him to know that he is a forced laborer, a slave who has escaped; He is then forced, under brutal direct coercion, to become a slave laborer for the plantations. Slavery is not a new phenomenon, the slaveholders or the ideologues of slavery today justify the slavery brought to America, that slavery existed in Africa, but it was not the slavery of the capitalist producers, the form of slavery originally proper to the capitalist mode of production. And then, these two forms of the process of primitive accumulation are going to occur.

With respect to what is happening with the native population, there is an estimate that is something like a few years after the conquest of America began, that the original population has been reduced to 10% of what it was before the conquest, and that the bulk of the population that has been annihilated belonged to the empires. So, we have this as a process with respect to America of primitive accumulation: the possibility of producing with a higher productivity of labor commodities that were already consumed by the countries of whose national processes, in the genesis of the national processes of capital accumulation is the conquest of America, and a whole series of new products that revolutionize the conditions of production in those same countries — the most massive case is the development of potato production in Ireland, in England and then in the rest of Europe, where this crop did not exist. So, we have this process.

What is happening with this originally commercial capital, with usurious capital? Primitive forms of industrial capital are appearing, and in the case of the United States in particular with a series of determinations, but among others that, very close [...] to the east coast of the United States [...] and western Europe [...], when this whole process occurs, there are the two raw materials that are key to the development of industry, accompanying these incipient movements of the capitalist mode of production, which are coal and iron. And then, in those places, a production will also appear that competes disadvantageously with the industry of the metropolis until it becomes independent of the relationship with the metropolis.

In the rest of America (which is Latin America, basically), the work that... I put it for the mining production of silver, which is more immediate: even the forced laborers on the basis of a relationship that came from the Inca Empire, which is the *mita*, which is a relationship of personal dependence by which a community has to pay tribute in work, a part of the community has to work on the lands of the Inca, another part of the community stays on their original lands because they are in charge of the reproduction of those who are not... Again, what worked with all the brutality of relations of personal dependence, which were far from being harmonious and idyllic relations, was a production of use values, this system that was the mita was reproduced and functioned.

When the mita becomes the source of forced labor power for the mines, what these incipient mining capitals do is annihilate it, to the point that they are reduced. The communities are no longer in a position to replace the labor force, because the mitayo had to return to the community when he went to another contingent, they

can no longer return, they cannot supply them with means of subsistence, so they need to dispose of their means of subsistence through incipient forms of wages. Those who have fulfilled the term of service become sellers of labor power, in all the primitive conditions of this condition, but in relatively quick terms, we see how the bond of personal dependence is diluted, dissolved, and becomes a bond established through the purchase and sale of labor power. With this I summarized these forms very strongly. I don't know if they want to raise something.

Javiera: I want to raise something, but there are two things: one is like a comment and the other a question, but perhaps it goes more towards the end. The comment is that I found interesting what you said at the beginning, before starting with this development, about how direct relationships are carriers and generate this way of organizing life as we know it today, right? And in that sense, of course, always the analyses... Well, anthropology gave me something more or less nuanced, but in general the analyses do not address all this development that even, I think is where you were going with the latter, that it is being nuanced, right? In other words, there is the bond of personal dependence in these communities, on the one hand, and on the other hand there is the buying and selling of labor power. As there is something mixed in this first one, I mean, I imagine that was a bit of what you were saying about how they are being carriers, like it's not something frenton, it's not something that happens immediately.

And here is the question, but it also seems to me that we sometimes talked about it in relation to all the proposals about primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession, Harvey, and everything that derives from it, and it is that there is indeed a tendency to look at this (I take from the last thing you said) that these relations are harmonious, that is, that there is an origin that seems to be harmonious, and for the same reason there are many political proposals today that are taken from this and propose this return to this origin and it seems to me extremely dangerous and politically costly to propose a return to this type of relationship; Of course, it seems that in order to put them as an alternative political action to capital, as on the outside, they detach themselves from all this content, this violent content, of dependence on the relations to which they were subjected... that is, what to say women, but society as a whole. So that, I don't know if at some point I remember that you said that we were going to look at something of these proposals about the so-called primitive accumulation and a continuity of this process today. It is also extremely relevant to the review you are doing, because all these proposals are looking at Latin America or so-called "underdeveloped" or "developing" countries. So, there is something similar that concerns us politically in terms of these proposals.

JIC: I add this before, I complement one thing. If it is these relations of personal dependence that organize the unity of social production, it is turned around, and the relations of personal dependence become forms of indirect relation, that is, forms of the movement of capital. So, the slavery of native populations of Africa and their descendants seems to be the apogee of a bond of personal dependence, which in reality that bond of personal dependence is bearing, it is becoming a form of the development of capital. So, from being the ones who gave unity, and commercial capital and usurious capital were forms of that unity, it is turned

around and now the bonds of personal dependence become forms of the movement of capital.

Now, I don't know if I am referring to the first thing you were proposing; Now: the capitalist mode of production is another form of brutality, but they are different forms in the development of the exercise of violence. When that violence is the bearer of bonds of personal dependence for the production of use values, than when it is the bearer of this indirect social relation, in particular for the production of money for the world market, because there is no use value that mediates the movement of that production (there are a lot of concrete manifestations that I leave aside now now). Therefore, these social forms are not idyllic, nor is the capitalist mode of production idyllic: they must be seen as forms of the development of the productive forces of social labor that contain the concrete forms that correspond to these stages of that development.

The other thing I wanted to raise is when it is said that such a country in America was incorporated into the world market, it was incorporated into production... Nothing was incorporated, because that would have been a presupposition that already existed as a capitalist production, and has been engendered as a space for the accumulation of capital by capital itself, by the process of the conquest and development of capital. With respect to what you say about the proposals of primitive accumulation, it is much more complex than I am going to mention it, but there is a difference that is: here, it is the generation of the capitalist mode of production that advances on those territories where life is governed by other forms of social bond; and it annihilates those other forms, it makes use of them, it transforms them if they serve them, if they do not serve them, it simply annihilates them. What is happening today is no longer the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production. To a large extent, many of these populations—if not all—have been converted by the capitalist mode of production into latent surplus population that is settled on territories that until a certain moment were useless to capital. And so he let them subsist in those places and that, at a certain point, of the development of large-scale industry, governed by the production of relative surplus value, they became sources of natural means of production that must be extracted, or territories on which cultivation can be developed that could not be developed before. and then, at the same time that it has converted them into latent surplus population and much of that population has migrated to the urban centers as active labor power for capital, and capital, on the basis of historical differentiation, even on the appearance of natural differentiation, serves to exploit that population more acutely; but what remained in the original territory, until now it was not because capital had not developed, it is because it did not serve capital. These populations are already the product of capital, their situation of misery is the product of capital, and what capital does now is: since that territory that this population was sitting on has become useless to it, it has become a useful territory, so what it does is: it annihilates them, displaces them, turns them into a labor force so that they can operate in that territory.

So, the nature of the process has a substantial difference. One was precisely the vanguard of the other, it was commercial capital, usurious capital. The vanguard of this advance now is industrial capital, supported by the development of the

Communist Party. Differentiation is not yet in Volume 1, it is in Volume 3, but it is no longer usurious capital, now it is capital lent at interest, which is a form of centralization of capital: the possibility of disposing of a mass of capital. Thus, even the subject who carries out the expulsion or annihilation of that original population is not the same as the one who corresponds to the original accumulation. So, one has to look at these differences.

Then the other aspect of what you were proposing has to do with the development of the productive forces of labor. Why can't these populations resist this advance? Because in fact the advance continues, continues, and continues to the point where this advance can be detrimental to the whole of capital, that it begins to be more costly to continue sustaining the advance than not to have those natural means of production, those raw materials. In Anti-Dühring there is a development that Engels makes about the difference in the development of the productive forces of social labour and the manifestation of this difference in the development of the productive forces of social labour. Why a mode of production is "defeated", to put it that way, another mode of production cannot be reproduced, sustained in the face of advance. And the figure that Engels uses is: Robinson Crusoe dominates Friday. And why does he master it? Because he has the sword. And he says: and one would like Viernes to have a revolver, and then the relationship would be reversed. But why does Robinson Crusoe have the sword and Friday doesn't? Because Robinson Crusoe comes from a society (and so here he comes in a very quick synthesis), from the capitalist mode of production. And so, this is to answer the question that it is a problem of abstract exercise of violence. But why can one exercise violence on the other? It depends on the productive forces that it is capable of putting into action; and the productive forces of capital are greater than those of the communities... that they were communities of mercantile producers, basically, because there is little left of producers than in some very isolated places, but... or in some places where the community still has a lot of weight, but which were small independent mercantile producers, and who can no longer reproduce their life process on that... Capital advances on them and they cannot oppose force. And, of course, in the exercise of violence, the representative of the total capital of society, to the extent that that territory, that production feeds its accumulation, is going to legitimize the advance of capital against the free producers (because they are all free producers who existed in a place).

This also appears in this chapter, if I remember correctly — I'm going to appear Miley, but—: to the extent that taxes appear, the production of commodities is obligatory, and it is one of the forms of the dissolution of primitive communities. When the Church does not have the fifth real, which was on gold and silver, the Church has the tithe, and when the tithe has to be paid and the tithe becomes a contribution in money, it is necessary to produce commodities. The individual is on the basis of a bond that is not the mercantile bond itself, he is obliged to produce commodities because if not, he has nothing to pay with; and this plays a central role in the dissolution of the bonds of personal dependence in primitive accumulation. But when you look at it today, where it is also very difficult to have produced one's own means of production and one's own means of life in its entirety without leaving the community – one always has to buy commodities –

then that forces, imposes the production of commodities and dissolves the bonds of community. So again, this is not the process of original accumulation, because this does not engender the capitalist mode of production: this is the *full development* of the capitalist mode of production; full in the sense that it is the advance of the capitalist mode of production in its non-original movement, but, on the contrary, fully developed. Because there is no such thing as underdevelopment: the development of capital accumulation has differentiations between different spaces, and the surplus working population is not the product of the insufficient development of capital, but the expression of the full development of capital. So, when in these regions there are masses of surplus working population, that is the product of capital. I don't know, Javiera, if you want to propose something with this.

Javiera: Yes. That there, in the same way, with regard to what you were already saying about the last taxes, the role played, for example, by the tribute in the Inca Empire, is different from the one it plays later with the Spaniards, right? In the Inca Empire, unlike what happened when the Spaniards arrived, for example, in Chile, the Incas maintained the communities, that is, they did not destroy the original or pre-Hispanic communities of the entire area.

JIC: No, no, those who were not originally in the Empire, they subdued.

Javiera: But they allowed them to maintain their beliefs, their religious system... There's a big difference between...

JIC: What happens is that the tax is either in kind or it is in labor. When the tribute is converted into a tribute in money, that is the tribute that already shows that the bonds of personal dependence are in dissolution.

Javiera: That's what I wanted to ask you. Because there is the tribute of the harvests, for example, that these pre-Hispanic communities gave to the Incas; and in work, right? So, when it appears in the form of money, that's where the dissolution of personal ties begins, right?

JIC: It's the expression that those personal ties... Because there has to be a bond... In the case of gold and silver mines, production is money directly, but if an agrarian community is asked to pay tribute in money, it has no alternative but to produce commodities outside the community, because it has to be linked to another social sphere with respect to which there is no direct personal link and only a link of a mercantile nature. So, I know the case of the Aztecs: there is some commodity production, but gold is not money: money is cocoa. Among the hierarchies of empire, that's where gold—apparently—circulates somewhat like money, but it basically circulates as an expression, as a symbol of power, but not as money, but as a shiny object that doesn't decompose, that looks like the sun (let's put it that way). And in all these empires, the highest hierarchy is represented, associated with the Sun. So, this is the symbol of the Sun, but it is a use value; therefore, as a use value it has a limitation in its extraction.

There is an expression of what happens to labor that is forced by the bonds of personal dependence when it becomes labor for the production of money for the world market, and it is linked to coca. In the Inca Empire, coca was for ceremonial

consumption, and the Spaniards are the ones who spread the production of coca, because with the brutal working conditions in the mines, the workers do not resist the effort they have to make, and coca compensates them, provides them with the strength they do not have. So, there it even appears how the consumption of something that is not money, or the production of something that is not money, is governed by the need for unlimited exploitation exercised by capital, against exploitation to obtain use values from the previous social relation, based on personal ties. Because that society needs to reproduce, then the Inca Empire cannot annihilate the Mitaya population, because if not, they will be left without the use values they need to reproduce; Capital annihilates the Mitaya population because it gets population to replace it, it does not need it to continue sustaining itself in production: it generates surplus working population and with that it will be supplied.

Javiera: Well, the same thing that happens with tobacco later.

JIC: I think tobacco also had some structure like this, what happens is that tobacco becomes a consumption in the countries... in Holland, in European countries; but yes, that is for the workers of large industry. I don't know if there's anything else. Now we would go to the content of the thing, to the axis of development, then I would leave it for the next one – that, in addition, we are all here – to be able to start and look at the axis in the accompaniment of development that Marx makes; In principle, I don't think it's going to take us too long.

[II]

[…] Well, let's get started. Two things. The first is if they want to go back to something we saw last time, but first a clarification. To me, the anxiety to get to the last Wednesday May finishing the thing made me screw up the last meeting and there was a whole development that I said: ah well, the only thing that is there is the problem of the concrete forms that primitive accumulation is made; and it is not the only thing that is, in reality a lot of the development that Marx does, which includes in part that of concrete forms, was missing, and I swallowed it happily. And then, when I reflected and looked at what I had to develop, I said: "What a beast...". So let's go back with that back. From what we saw last time, is there anything you want to discuss anyway?

Edgardo: Juan, I do. I had the opportunity to see yesterday's recording of your presentation on the history of Latin America. Because in past sessions, especially when we saw the forms of the surplus working class, we came to comment something about the New International Division of Labor and so on. And I had a comment related to your presentation yesterday, with this issue of the NDIT, so I don't know if it's worth raising it. […] Because in the exhibition you said that, let's say, these forms of capital that arrived in America personified by the European conquerors (user capital, commercial capital, and then also industrial capital in an incipient way). But that, in the areas where these great empires existed (you mentioned the Aztec empire, the Inca empire), capital did not wipe out the native population, but used it in... Well, in the case of Mexico, in mining production, to

produce money for the world market. And above all because this labor force was apt – because there were already very centralized societies, with a "political" scheme, so to speak, very hierarchical, etc. – for large-scale collective work, etc., while in areas such as the East Coast of the United States and also the area of Brazil closest to Europe, where they were mostly hunter-gatherers and capital could not put them to work on plantations and rather decided to extinguish the native population or displace it.

So, my question went along those lines; because in past sessions you had said that the incorporation of Mexico into the New International Division of Labor[326], which has been similar to what happened with East Asia, was due more than anything else to the proximity to the United States, but Guido Starosta in different texts and also Nicolás Grinberg have mentioned that it is not due to this reason. but rather to the moral and material attributes that the Mexican labor force carries that make it suitable for large-scale industrial work. So I don't know if we could trace these attributes historically to the native peoples who existed here in Mexico. Obviously, there would be a lot of historical research needed, a lot of mediations...

JIC: Yes, I wouldn't know... I don't know the history of Mexico to ask if they have the productive attributes or not. My impression is that the Chinese peasant of the year 2000 or—let's go further back—Korean of the year 1980, I don't think he came with a history of work with a structure of discipline and so on, like the... I don't know if he was a peasant or a Mexican worker. You will know better than I do. One knows something more about the history of Mexico than about the history of Korea, and it may be that in Korea there have been a series of movements and things, but the history of Mexico during the twentieth century does not seem to be a parallel history to that of the Korean peasant. And the type of production that is installed in Mexico, unless it requires productive attributes that are different from those of the East Asian worker – but it does not give the impression that there is a substantial difference – in the 80s, I do not know if they were assimilable. Is the Mexican a disciplined peasant with a strong vertical organization of production?

Edgardo: Well, yes, Nicolás Grinberg throws a book out there, and he gives as the reason that Mexico has these material and moral attributes suitable for the NDIT because of its history, even tracing it back to its pre-Hispanic history; and the fact that they come from a society like the Aztecs, and also the Mayans, who reached a fairly complex vertical structure with a fairly centralized work, etc. But there would be a lack of a mediation of three centuries out there, then from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century.

JIC: Also with this peculiarity. I understand that the maquiladora industry was installed in the north of Mexico, and the Mayan empire does not reach that territory, I understand that it is more located in the south of Mexico (of the territory, I say). So, to suppose that these workers are Mayan peasants, "modern Mayans", I don't know if it is the concrete history of that labor force, if there is a process of migration within Mexico from the south to the north to occupy that labor force, or that labor force was already based in the north; but the rural north

[326] Hereinafter, "NDIT".

with a different productive structure. I say again: I know from the history of Mexico the images that are linked to the Mexican Revolution, to the U.S. invasion of Texas and the whole process of occupation of that territory, but I have the impression — I don't know, tell me — that there was no production under irrigation with disciplined peasants, and if there was not, there was a migration to that territory. Because I also understand that the old Mexican industry was in the Federal District, that it is not that there was an industrial tradition in that area that produced for the domestic market and that this industrial tradition reverted to maquiladora production. But I can answer no more than that. These are questions... You, Edgardo, there you have a task.

Edgardo: No, yes, yes. Because in fact, in the north of Mexico, when the Spaniards arrived, there were only communities that were hunter-gatherers, they were all nomads. The conditions out there, a lot of desert conditions where it's difficult to have large populations, so yes... And in fact it was very difficult for the Spaniards to conquer that area of Mexico because they were not centralized communities, so it was difficult to organize them politically under a single command.

JIC: Of course, and we would also have to see what production they could develop in that territory, especially when the option was to develop the production of money for the world market in what had been the territory of the Aztec Empire.

Edgardo: There are many things to keep thinking about.

JIC: What I would add to this is an observation. To the population of empires, what this expansion of the process of conquest does is that it annihilates an enormous part of the population. This estimate — I had the source somewhere — that within a few years of the beginning of the conquest the population of America had been reduced to 10% of what it was, the bulk of that reduction is in the empires. What they do is that in any case they preserve a part of the population, and — I suppose, I know of the Inca Empire — in Mexico they also preserve structures of labor organization that come from the Empire and convert them into forms of labor organization for the production of gold and silver.

Edgardo: Yes, I also understand that this happened here.

JIC: You have until the end of May to clarify how things were. If you criticize the proximity, the border... In addition, the question is why it is installed right in that area and not installed in Mexico City, which was where there were already industrial workers. There was a sharp fall in real wages in Mexico in 1982, which was the debt crisis, and then, at least as far as I could see the statistics (I don't have more up-to-date statistics), the average industrial wage never recovered.

Edgardo: In fact, I think you had once said that in Argentina the highest salary level came in 1974, once you mentioned that to us, and here in Mexico the other day I was looking at some statistics and it also reached its highest point in 1976, and to this day it has not recovered.

JIC: It has never recovered.

Edgardo: No, it's an abysmal difference. And now it has recovered a little because this administration has raised the minimum wage a lot, but before the increase in the minimum wage, in 2020, the difference was still abysmal. So, there are many things there, many determinations that must be explained.

JIC: I'm serious, it would be interesting if you could clarify it further. Because sometimes what one does is, let's put it like this, one arrives at very general conclusions, and then one has to see if the concrete forms responded to that or one is extrapolating appearances or things that seem to one to be immediate to processes that contain different determinations. Because there is another element that makes me think about this, which is... What was supposed to happen in Haiti immediately before the earthquake? It was the incorporation of the Haitian population as workers in this process of a new form of the international division of labor. And it is clear that in that case there are no workers with a history of irrigated cultivation and so on: what there was was a ferocious cheapness of the labor force. And then, the question is also whether in the north of Mexico there was not a ferocious cheapness of the labor force... The question is where the maquiladora industry got its labor force: if the local labor force that existed in rural production, if there were significant internal migrations... What is the origin of that population?

Edgardo: Yes, in fact what I find interesting in the case of Mexico, and in fact this was something that Fernando Cazón pointed out in an article and also [...][327] I think it's called the other one, which is not there right now, but they mention it in an article saying that, unlike what happened in East Asia, where the incorporation of these countries, their starting point was deplorable working conditions, in Mexico the starting point of incorporation into the NDIT was a different starting point: to incorporate Mexico, a deterioration of the existing working conditions was necessary. So, that's what makes you think is that maybe it wasn't cheapness that explains why Mexico joined the NDIT and it's other determinations.

JIC: What happens is that they achieved the cheapness, which I suppose is a relative cheapness anyway (not the East Asian wage level at the beginning). But there is another issue that plays a role, and that is that these national processes of accumulation in East Asia were incorporating more and more complex work, which precisely also has to do with the origin and conditions of that population that is incorporated, and the simplest work was being displaced to other territories where, On the other hand, there was a latent surplus peasant population with the same history of disciplined work and so on. And it gives the impression (I don't know, that's also something to look at) that the Mexican maquiladora industry (which is one of the oldest, in some ways, it comes from the 80s) was not increasing in complexity of the processes it does. Korea starts with footwear and textiles, and today I think it is one of the main producers of steel, shipping industry, producer of cars for the world market with its own brand, with capital that has its starting point in the territory itself... And I have the impression that Mexico did not

[327] Inaudible.

go through that type of transformation, but I don't know for sure either, but one has to ask oneself if there was that evolution or not.

Edgardo: Yes, apparently there wasn't. Well, many of those who, with the economic and financial "liberation" of Mexico with the entry of neoliberal policies, were very enthusiastic and saying that Mexico was going to become a power, already in the early 2000s said no, that this was not going to happen. And I just think that the literature that he has reviewed points precisely to that, that Mexico never took off in complexity. And there were times when it seemed like it was going to take off, especially in the automotive industry, and it seemed that it was just false illusions.

JIC: And well, that's also worth looking at, I suppose that in any case, everything becomes much more complicated with the issue of drug trafficking, which must also affect conditions of sale of the workforce, working conditions, structure of labor discipline and so on. But hey, we'll add it to you by the end of May. Phenomenon. Let's go to the development that I should have done last time and that I forgot and swallowed.

We had arrived at the point where Marx is going to propose with the text: well, we have to go and see when capital emerges not as accumulated surplus value, but still as something that did not produce itself. And what we had come to is that he looks at this process and questions the myth of the thrifty industrious individuals and the lazy individuals willing to spend happily and that this is the origin of the capitalists and this is the origin of the workers, and he makes this observation that primitive accumulation has a violent character, of the exercise of violence.

And then, what he begins to propose is that, if one takes and follows even the development that he has been making from the first chapter of Volume I, the origin of capital has to go back, not simply to the historical origin in the sense of what it is deploying, but to what was seen to take place. And what was seen when it started is commodity and money. And what he is going to say is that neither the commodity nor money are means of capital. And in the next step what he is going to propose is: neither the means of capital are in themselves capital: they must have become capital. And that this transformation must have been carried out in the separation, or gestation, of two social classes that are separate, two classes of commodity owners. On the one hand, owners of money, means of production and means of livelihood; and on the other hand, free workers who have nothing to sell is their labor power.

And so what he is going to propose is: well, this refers to what in Chapter IV, when he first confronts the conditions for there to be workers who sell labor power and makes the observation that they have to be free individuals because they have to have the private power over their own labor power, but that they also have to be separated from their means of production and life, what he says at that moment is: well, it is clear that in order to be able to develop work it is a condition to be linked to the means of production and the means of life, and that therefore, the existence of these doubly free individuals cannot be a natural condition of

human life. but it has to be the result, he says, of a long process of historical development. And at that point, what he says is: but we are going to do the same thing that the capitalist does: we are not going to ask ourselves where this individual came from, what we are going to consider is that these individuals exist and we are going to move forward. And now what comes is the answer regarding the historical origin, what was said there "we are not going to look at it", now the movement of capital itself leads us to the need to look at it. It can no longer be taken as a fact, but we have to take it as how these individuals were generated.

And then, he is going to take back the condition of doubly free individuals by stating that, on the one hand, they cannot be among the means of production, as happens to the slave, but neither will they have their own means of production, and he compares it to the free peasant, owner of his own land; What they are going to propose is: they are simply free in this double sense. And so, the historical genesis of the capitalist mode of production is the development of the differentiation and emergence of these two types of commodity owners: owners of means of production and of means of subsistence in the form of commodities; possessors of labor power in the form of commodities.

2. The Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land.

It will develop what has already been seen, that the capitalist mode of production itself, once it is underway, its reproduction reproduces this separation and multiplies it. But then, when one is asking oneself about the starting point of this separation, that starting point is prior to the movement of capital—because all capital can do is reproduce and multiply it, it is earlier—and that this process of primitive accumulation has to be the process in which on the one hand the worker and on the other the conditions of labor are separated, and the direct producers bound up with their means of production become workers separated from means of production and means of subsistence, and the owners of money, means of production and means of subsistence, become capitalists. And then what you're going to look at is this process.

The starting point that appears with respect to the condition of the worker as a doubly free individual, this relationship is linked, is the process in which the direct producer becomes able to dispose of his person and, therefore, becomes an individual free from bonds of personal dependence. To have the labor power to sell, you have to have the freedom to move, the freedom not to be tied to a partial task... (Marx is going to give a series of concrete examples linked to the structure of the craft guilds and so on). And then, the first thing that appears in the process of generating wage workers as doubly free individuals is the development of their first freedom. That is, of the two freedoms, the first is not to be subject to personal dependence on other individuals. And then he is going to make two observations.

The first is that the ideologues of the capitalist mode of production, this is the only aspect they see of development, of the origin of the capitalist mode of production: it is the realization of human freedom, it is the dissolution of all the

bonds that subjected the workers, the direct producers, to regulations that tied them to a certain job, etc. So, the first thing that is going to appear is this, it is the epic of human freedom. When we looked at Chapter I, and then several times when we went on, what we looked at was in particular this question: it is the emergence of the capitalist mode of production that dissolves all bonds of personal dependence; it engenders a society where for the first time the members of that society are universally free individuals, they see themselves as equals because they relate through the exchange of equivalents, and they have the productive forces of the free individual. And also one of the things that we emphasized in looking at the first chapter was the question that it is in the capitalist mode of production that the concept, the image of the human being, can emerge in the history of human society, because in all the previous forms where there are bonds of personal dependence, The asymmetry or the curtailment of these ties does not allow individuals to see themselves with a common condition. And this is among the things that Marx proposes about Aristotle, who realizes that the substance of value is the labor materialized in commodities, the productive expenditure of human labor power, but that he cannot recognize that there is a productive expenditure of this human body *in general* because it is a member of a society where there are masters and there are slaves.

So, the first thing that one has here is this, that Marx is going to pose it, but when one thinks about it, he deploys it with respect to political discourses, ideological discourses, this thing of this is permanently appearing: this is the achievement of the capitalist mode of production, it is the bearer of human freedom. What is the condition for human freedom? Private property. Well, since in Argentina we are hearing it abundantly, the association comes to me directly. So, that freedom implies the dissolution of the old form of forced labor, forced labor based on personal dependence.

Marx, all this development will be particularly linked to the passage from feudal society to the capitalist society that is typical of Europe, even more so of Western Europe, the observations will be very immediately linked to this development. And then he says: this has to revolutionize the conditions of feudal production and create the conditions for the capitalist production process. The dissolution of feudal relations of production takes the form of the displacement of the peasants, the expulsion of the peasants, serfs, their expulsion from the land; and at the same time, and in something that Marx will give a lot of relevance to (later it will immediately appear why, what role it plays), the expulsion of the serfs on the one hand, and the expropriation of the land of the peasants who already appear as free peasants. And once expelled from the land, they are turned into a transhumant mass of vagabonds, and by direct coercion the discipline necessary for wage labor is imposed on them. When we spoke about this last time with respect to America, this is where the mark of the individuals condemned to debt bondage appears, because of the impossibility of reproducing their lives because they have been expelled from the conditions of production. One of the forms of expulsion, as we have already seen, is the entire advance of usurious capital on the peasants, and this is engendering this mass of labor power that capital needs.

3. Bloody legislation against the expropriated since the end of the fifteenth century. Laws reducing wages

And he makes another observation, in the midst of all the development of concrete forms, which for me is particularly relevant, which is that at the same time that the laws are eliminating all forms of feudal relations (the guilds, that whole structure of organization), they prohibit, despite the fact that they appear as free individuals, the actions that are already proper to the working class: they prohibit strikes, they prohibit unionization. And here he makes a reference in reverse by saying that the English Parliament finally had to abolish these laws, and acted as if it had been the guild of the capitalists against the workers. Something that Adam Smith already denounces and already puts forward by saying that the workers want to associate in defense of... Smith is clear that the relationship between workers and capitalists is an antagonistic relationship and he says that the workers want to associate, in the face of the strength of the "bosses" (that is the term Smith is going to use), the workers in a desperate situation to reproduce their lives want to associate, and what he is going to propose is that the laws do not allow them to do so; On the other hand, the bosses do associate with each other and have the support of the State, and then the workers always lose. Well, here it appears: the role of these laws and this prohibition, the laws of dissolution of the bonds proper to feudal society, and at the same time the laws of prohibition of the bonds that already arise from the buying and selling of labor power—in particular, among the sellers of labor power—is one of the concrete ways in which the development of capital is transformed or engendered.

4. Genesis of the capitalist farmer

So, on the one hand, it has this gestation of what is the origin of the working class. And now what is happening is the origin of the capitalist class. And, also taking here the dissolution of feudal ties, what he is going to propose is that the expropriation of the peasant population only directly creates large landowners, there is a process of centralization of territorial property. So, here the emergence of the tenant is missing. And then, he goes on to say: the genesis of the tenant develops slowly. This development is linked to the fact that serfs and peasants displaced from the land were not all in the same economic and patrimonial situation. And there are some who already have the capacity to have accumulated a certain disposition over the means of production. And then, the figure of the agrarian capitalist will appear under the figure of a tenant who has its origin in serfs or peasants who start with a difference in the availability of money, this does not go to the transhumant mass, these are the origin of the tenant capitalist. Let's go? Do you want to raise something?

Randy: I don't know how to pose the question that arises in my mind. It is as if there is a mutation in the nature of violence: first it begins with an expropriation, almost with an unfounded, pure violence, which then takes the forms of law, which would seem to change the nature of violence. But I am left with the question: where does the violence that gives rise to this come from?

JIC: We had something of this whole movement when we saw the three forms of tribute in feudal society (tribute in labor, in kind, and in money): the lords need money for their general social relation. One of the most manifest forms of this is what happens in France with the transfer of the court to Paris, where the monarchy forces the nobles to settle in Paris, so there is no alternative to income in money, because the income in kind does not reach that subject to satisfy his personal needs. where all parasitic consumption is going to play a role in demanding this money. In the case of England, the reference that appears as historically classical is that of enclosures, where there is a transformation of land that was agricultural for peasants into forests. In other parts of Europe, what is being proposed... There are those who criticize Marx saying that enclosures were this purely English phenomenon, it does not exist in that process that Marx is describing, it is not like that. Then, a multiplicity of forms appears.

[…] One can look at it as an expression of the development of the productive forces of labor, but here what is looking more directly at how it was conceived: they are expelled from the earth. The transhumant masses are a whole period of English history that has a significant role, that they have to live by appropriating what they find along the way. The other thing I said about servants for debt. Well, legislation comes along that condemns those conditions, and on the basis of that legislation comes direct violence. The eviction of the land is not mediated by legislation, although I suppose it is possible that part of the expulsion of the peasants from the land they occupied is linked to... What is happening today in Argentina and Chile, what has happened historically, let it be linked to: someone who has a title to that land appeared, get out of here. So what you're looking at is that process.

If one looks at how the laws are passed with the excuse that they prohibit feudal guilds, which is a step in the development of the capitalist mode of production, it is that workers' guilds are prohibited, because here is freedom and there does not have to be any type of union. When the capitalist mode of production is developing and the sale of labor power for its value is imposed, when we look at the relationship between base and superstructure, then the movement of the total capital of society needs the political representation of the working class in antagonistic relationship with the capitalist class. but as an expression of the unity of the process – in this case, national – of capital accumulation. And then, the laws that prohibit strikes disappear, but now that they are over... this is in the century, this is in the middle of the nineteenth century, a little earlier, but the enclosures and all that process, I'm not sure, but I get the impression that it's around the sixteenth-seventeenth century; So, there is a whole transition in that transformation.

The condition for the smooth movement of the total capital of society, then, necessarily takes the form of a class struggle which in turn takes the form of legal regulations. Then all legislation is transformed. We also saw it when we took the chapter on large-scale industrial machinery, that the need for education, the need for the prohibition of child labor, which arise as needs of capital; Because one necessity of social capital is that the working class has the strength to confront the

capitalist class, and in the form of the class struggle, it appears as imposing the prohibition of child labor, the development of education, etc. So, there one has to look more carefully at the concrete historical process. What underlies all this is the development of the productive forces of social labour, this is the way in which that development takes. When it passes from one mode of production to another mode of production, in a process... long if one looks at it with reference even to the subsequent transformations within the capitalist mode of production. But if you look at the history of humanity over 2 or 3 million years, two or three centuries, it's almost an instant. So, with respect to the historical development of humanity, it is a very rapid transformation; At the same time, if one looks at it from the point of view of the subjects who carried this transformation, the process is eternal, it lasts until the right to strike is conquered as a legal conquest, it cost – and continues to cost the working class – blood, deaths in quantity, violence exercised by capital, etc. So, from the point of view of the subject who is the immediate bearer of the transformation, the transformation seems to be just unfolding in an extremely slow process. From the point of view of historical unity, of the development of human life, these transformations are increasingly accelerated, and what took millions of years to... the overcoming of the primitive community that has been going on for two or three million years. So, this appears. I don't know if I answered your concern or not.

Randy: yes, yes, kinda yes. Maybe I wouldn't know how to formulate...

JIC: It may be that with what comes next it will become clearer. I would say to continue advancing in this process.

5. Impact of the agricultural revolution on industry. Creation of the internal market for industrial capital.

There is going to be another development that Marx is going to propose on the role played by the expropriation and expulsion of a mass of the rural population. It separates the workers from their means of subsistence and their material means of labour, and they are then at the disposal of capital as a source of labour-power. But the other development that is carried through this process is the development of the internal market. And Marx is looking at this process in England in particular, and he's looking at it as a nationally cut process, the case that he's taking as an expression. And what he is going to propose with respect to the role of the development of the internal market is that this internal market, which in its origin has the disappearance of the peasants who produced their own means of living, and which was always linked to artisanal production, creates the possibility that industrial production reaches a sufficient scale to be able to develop. So, what is going to appear here is: just as this is the genesis of the mass of labor power, it is the liquidation of all social production that is not subordinated to capital itself. It is the impossibility for direct producers to be self-sufficient.

6. Genesis of the industrial capitalist.

And so, with this passage to the internal market as a condition for the development of industrial capital, now what is going to unfold is the development of the industrial capitalist. And what is he going to say? It is much more rapid than the development of the capitalist or of capital in agricultural production, the transformation of the peasant or the serf from the tenant. And here the development of commercial capital will play a central role, the reference to the advances in the conquest of America, Asia and Africa will appear, and how the two forms that capital had in feudal society are the ones that advance pushing industrial capital: usurious capital and commercial capital; until, as it were, this is reversed, and industrial capital is going to "subordinate" merchant's capital and interest-bearing capital (the transformation of usurious capital into interest-borrowed capital).

Around these developments, Marx will refer to the central role played by the discovery of gold and silver in America, the use of the native population as a labor force for the extraction of gold and silver, the plundering of gold and silver that already existed, African slavery as a source of labor force for the plantations in America... And it is going to add the role that trade wars have (it is making a whole sequence in development, I am trying to take the axes) in the process of primitive accumulation. And he is going to make a historical sequence, saying that the axis first passes through Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and England, and he is going to synthesize the most decisive forms of this process.

And what he is going to propose in this is: the colonial system, the public debt system (what he calls the "modern tax system") and the protectionist system. All this, which takes the form of the exercise of state power, is the dissolution of all forms of the bond of personal dependence—except that the colonial system contains what we saw before, but it is either for the production of money for the world market or it is for the production of commodities for the world market. it is not the production of use-values for the masters of the nails in the production of value. And these conditions, when one looks at the history of the countries of Latin America in particular – in Argentina this appears – the colonial system, public debt, tax system and protectionism – which is so, in part it does not appear, but it is for England this – are the bases in which what is synthesized here is: the starting point was direct relations, the direct organization of the process of social metabolism. And commercial capital, usurious capital, were forms of these direct regulations. And now, with all this development, the movement has been turned around: direct relations, the power of the state, is the form that is the bearer of the development of the indirect organization proper to the capitalist mode of production. If the incipient forms of capital were concrete forms of the feudal relation, and therefore it was a direct regulation that had among its forms aspects of indirect regulation, now what we have is an indirect regulation that has as its form direct regulation. I don't know if this was clear.

Edgardo: Yes, yes, I think so. A turn of the screw.

JIC: And then it is going to unfold these things that you raised there, referring to how to move from the domination of commercial and user capital over industrial capital, how this is invested, it is going to raise the role of public debt and the development of an international credit system, and the sources of wealth to pay for this is the transformation of this process of primitive accumulation. the separation of the direct producer from his means of production.

He says that debt drags behind it the need for the tax system, and the role of protectionism in the development of primitive accumulation, he says: "[...] it was an *artificial means of manufacturing manufacturers, expropriating independent workers, capitalizing on the means of production and living of the nation, and abbreviating*"—there, the term "abbreviate"...—"*the transition from the ancient to the modern regime of production*."[328] Why does the term "abbreviate" give me criticism? Because when this "abbreviation" of a process is proposed, something that is a necessary form of that process is being put on the outside. Then, it appears as if it were external: this would have happened like this if this had not happened. But what happened... Okay, if you say: well, a meteorite fell in the middle of the thing, or the volcano exploded and the entire population was burned. But these are the forms of the development of this process of primitive accumulation. Then, the term "abbreviate", "accelerate", appears as an exterior. I would say: it passes to those forms that are carriers of this development at the speed with which this development generates and reproduces them. That speed may be greater or less, but because of the determinations that the process in front of it has, but those determinations can never be seen as external. I don't know if there is anything they want to raise in this regard, because in political discourses, in particular on overcoming the capitalist mode of production, the term "this is how we accelerate the development of this process, we shorten the development" often appears...

Well, this is the synthesis of the forms that the process of primitive accumulation is taking. He's going to end by saying: this includes the abduction of children. And he is going to make another observation that is quoted many times, which is that violence is the midwife of every old society that carries in its bowels a new one, it is in itself an economic power. This is the form taken by the transformation of the feudal mode of production and the modes of production on which capital advances, the exercise of violence is the proper form of the development of the productive forces.

Randy: How? I didn't understand.

JIC: This: with all these forms of violence that appear in primitive accumulation, what one has in front of one is that they are not external when the capitalist mode of production is engendered, and therefore one is the bearer of the overcoming of feudal society in capitalist society. They are not external, but they make the very transformation of the organization of production, of the process of production and of social consumption. How the peasants are transformed into workers, they are expelled from the land, they are converted into labor forces for capital, this is a transformation of the organization of production, it necessarily takes the form of a

[328] Marx, K. (1977: 643), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

violent process: it is the expulsion violently exercised on the peasants so that they leave the land, they become the transhumant mass, they become the mass of labor power at the disposal of capital, artisanal production disappears and industry can develop on the scale of the internal market. It is not an accident: it is a moment in the organization of social production. I don't know if that's it.

And here we come... He makes the critique of consciousness that has now appeared to Europeans in particular: what the general consciousness of this society does, Marx is going to put forward as "public opinion", he celebrates all these brutal forms as legitimate because they serve the accumulation of capital. Are we going this far? Because now what is coming is a synthesis of this. It is: the ideological discourse about the natural and eternal laws of the capitalist mode of production, of its historical genesis, with its glorification of human freedom, has an origin that is the opposite of the ideological discourse of genesis, it is the opposite of what is proposed. And what it entails is the separation, on the one hand, of the "great mass of the people", transformed into wage workers, he is going to make the reference to "'*poor workers*'",[329] because in the time of Smith and Ricardo (even earlier), many times, when the reference to workers appears, the term used is "poor", and free. Here there is a question of the translation of FCE that makes me suspect if it is reliable, see if you have Siglo XXI there, and it says, he ends the sentence by saying: "[...] *this artificial product of modern history*."[330]

Randy: Yes, in the 21st century it says: "[...] in '*industrious poor*' free, that *artificial product of modern history*",[331] the same.

JIC: I guess the "artificial" there... I don't know if it's very appropriate, we'd have to see what word is in German, because it gives the feeling that it's not what one would immediately take for "artificial", but that it's "artifice": this is what modern history has done. But I don't know if maybe nothing, it's simply put like that. And the last thing I would dwell on, accompanying Marx's development, is also the synthesis that "*capital* comes into the world dripping blood and mud from every pore, from head to toe."[332] I put it in this relation that I recently had the opportunity to make: when barbarism is put forward as what would happen if the capitalist mode of production is not overcome, it is ignoring that the capitalist mode of production, from its origin, is barbarism, it is this brutal form of organization of the process of social life. I don't know if they want to raise something, because now we are going to enter into an aspect that will flow until the end of the chapter, where these forms no longer appear, but what the content is, what this whole process entails.

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[329] Marx, K. (1977: 646), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Marx, K. (1988: 950), *Capital*, Book One, Vol. III. Mexico City: Siglo XXI.
[332] Marx, K. (1977: 646), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

7. Historical tendency of capitalist accumulation.

Well, I continue. Marx [...] is going to open this development with a question: what does the original accumulation of capital, the historical genesis of the capitalist mode of production, tend towards? And he puts it literally as a question. And if one looks at what we have been looking at to a large extent in what had seemed to us to be the first freedom of the worker, in the sense that the master of the slave, the master, etc., is no longer subject to personal domination, what Marx is going to propose is that above all, what one has in front of one is a change of form: There is a transformation of the way in which the direct producer, the worker, is a forced laborer.

I make the clarification that it is more briefly in the text, but that in essence it is this: the serf or the slave were forced laborers because of their ties of personal dependence; What we have already seen is that the worker who sells labor power is a forced laborer because he is a doubly free individual. He is still a forced laborer, what has changed is the way this forced labor is. And one can associate it in this development, if one looks at the formal subsumption of the worker in capital, it is this transformation. What Marx is going to propose is: the key to primitive accumulation is in the expropriation of the direct producer, it is the destruction of private property based on labor itself. I make this clarification: this was already a free individual, and so the question is that if I look at what has changed formally, the only thing I see, the only thing that primitive accumulation tells me is: well, the character, the form of forced labor has changed, and that is, if I look at the first freedom of the worker. But if I look at a subject who before the capitalist mode of production was already a free individual, for which he had as a condition to be the private owner of his means of production, the key to what the process of primitive accumulation does is what happens to the productive forces of free labor when they become productive forces of doubly free labor. And this is what will follow in the development of the text.

Randy: So when you're referring to the dissolution of private property based on self-labor, are you going back to the beginnings of capital? That is, the producers...

JIC: This is complex. I read it like this, what confronts me is this: all the development that we have seen so far is what the capitalist mode of production does in the historical process, and what it does with the labor of that free individual. That now references are going to appear [...] what happens to this work, what productive forces does it have, and when that direct producer who was a free individual, is transformed into a doubly free individual, what can he do that he could not do as a simply free individual. And what he can do is the entire deployment of Volume 1.

Randy: So here, instead of a historical analysis, there would be a bit of logic.

JIC: Here is the content of what happens, that's why... I don't know whether to raise it now or to raise it after having made the development that Marx does, but I

have once had a discussion at a table with a Marxist historian of presence, where he stated in his speech that what Marx proposes about the origin of the capitalist mode of production is wrong because in reality what there were were not free producers, there was no figure of the free peasant, they are marginal: what there was massively is slaves, serfs, workers forced by estate structures. And my response at that time was: here he is not saying that this is the historical development, here he unfolded the entire historical development. What he is proposing is: this is the key to this historical development.

Then, and this leads to the most complex discussion that we can return to, is the whole discussion of whether... Well, two things. Nicolas Grinberg was working, I think I had mentioned it to you the other time, on the historical genesis of the capitalist mode of production, and why England as a central. I made a series of criticisms, comments about whether I was not forcing that movement too much. But from what he observes is that in Europe there were, in the different societies, a large number of producers, of free peasants, of free artisans, but especially the condition of free peasants and that is therefore valid, as a process of concrete historical development also has this form.

Edgardo: In other words, what Marx exposes in that chapter is also valid as a historical process.

JIC: That predominance of peasant production, which is in Europe, is not in America...

Edgardo: Is the plot in England or in all of Europe (well, at least in Western Europe?

JIC: What Nicolás sees is that there was much beyond England, but that in England there was a particularly strong this. From my point of view, for me it is not relevant whether it is the concrete historical process or this is the key to the historical process. It matters to me as a key to the historical process, because this tells me what the capitalist mode of production does.

Now, here also appears the whole discussion of whether Marx considered that there was a simple production of commodities as a general historical fact or not. So, Engels is credited with saying that there is a mode of production, or something like that, of simple commodities, and that he falsified what Marx said. Now, in Volume 3 there is a paragraph by Marx that says verbatim, I don't remember exactly, but the content is that the simple production of commodities is the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, they accuse Engels of changing the place of that sentence, but the sentence was written, so wherever it is, is what Marx proposes. And when one looks at it in development, what appears strongly is the expression that as soon as it begins with the development of the form of value, what it is going to say is that the development of the form of value is the development of the commodity form, as the historical development of the commodity form.

When he looks at the production of absolute surplus value, I always present it in the workshops not strictly as historical development, but he presents it strongly, as if these conditions are given; and the conditions that are given are those of independent production in emergencies: there is a productive technique, there is a working day that capital will later try to extend, there is a subsistence wage that is given and that is what that producer, if he were not a worker, would need to reproduce his labor power, and now, as he is a worker, he has taken the form of the value of labor power, and there is the historical and moral element that comes from the conditions of the previous society.

When he develops relative surplus value, a historical sequence also strongly appears in the exhibition. And for me, again, I don't know if that historical sequence is so faithful, because, among other things, in that historical sequence it puts the division of manual labor as the condition for the development of machinery. And when one looks at the manual assembly line, what one finds is the other way around: from the development of machinery springs a process of division of manual labor, a manufacture sprouts, the assembly of machinery is manufacturing. But all development is strongly structured, accompanying a historical process. I put it again: from my point of view, what I see there and what confronts me is the content of that process; I'm not going to say "I don't care" because it would be very... What he answers me is not the problem of the development of the historical process: what matters to me is what capital is today, what the capitalist mode of production does with free labor, when it converts it into work done by a doubly free worker; and I read the deployment of capital, and that process is step by step.

I was going to propose to you, when we complete the development that Marx does, to go back through that process and say: well, here is what we are seeing at the end of this chapter, it is what is unfolded throughout Volume 1. And that, moreover, from the point of view of the method, once again accounts for the need for the starting point. Already before it appears that it realizes the necessity of the starting point, but now what appears is: of course, it had to start with the commodity in order to understand what the capitalist mode of production does when it separates the direct producer, the free individual, the private owner of his means of production, and turns him into a doubly free worker. It is the development of the productive forces of individual free labor as productive forces of a free labor done collectively —I advance the...—, always within the limits of a social labor that is organized in a private and independent way. So, that's what you saw unfold in all this development. And now, then, what Marx is going to unfold very synthetically is what happens to a society in which private property based on labor itself prevails, what limits it has, and how the abolition, the expropriation of the direct producer of his means of production and his means of subsistence is the condition for the development of these productive forces that spring from the social character of labor.

I don't know if you want to raise anything else now, because I would leave it to take it up from the outset next Wednesday, how it unfolds things that, in part, are said at the start, or at a certain point in the development of the production of surplus value by saying: this condition can only be made on the basis of the... When

he looks at the development of machinery in agricultural production, he will make this point: science can only be applied on the basis of the dissolution of peasant production, because peasants are isolated individuals who cannot set up a directly social labor force. Science is the product of capital because a society of free individuals, private owners of their means of production, cannot develop scientific knowledge because each one is tied to the immediate production that he has to carry out in order to reproduce his life.

Well, next time we look at all this development. I would say: let's look at this, let's look at the synthesis and in the middle, I want to raise a critique of Marx's development in the chapter; and even contrast it with a development that is outlined, let's say, in the drafts, in the *Grundrisse*, why not take it later. Of course, Marx would know why he did not take it, no one can say why he did not take it, but it draws attention and forces us to ask ourselves what appears there. See you next Wednesday.

[II]

Almost the last time I ask the question: is there anything from the previous time that you want to go back to? So, let's move on...

Javiera: I have a doubt. Last week I got lost with something [...], we were talking about the double freedom of the worker, and I think you said [...] as if deep down he was not doubly free, but he was already free and it seems to me that collective work was associated. Can it be?

JIC: Yes, I don't know how far, my memory was that we hadn't made much progress with that. In any case, I propose it again now as a start.

Javiera: Come on, wait a little, but how far do we go? Until the 4th?

JIC: We come to the last part of development. [...]

Is there anything else? So let's go... We had accompanied the development of the concrete forms that the process of primitive accumulation is taking, and all this appears from the exercise of violence and the destruction of previous forms or social relations, etc. And now Marx is going to pose the point at which we are in the form of a question, which I think is what we had almost closed with last time. The question is: what does the original accumulation of capital, the historical genesis of the capitalist mode of production, tend towards? And the answer that is going to be given, for me, one can associate it as the culminating point of the unfolding of the question of the formal subsumption and the real subsumption of labor in capital, of the worker with respect to the capitalist (since this is tomorrow's theme, I have it well in mind), but in this sense. Because what Marx is going to propose is that when he does not limit himself to directly converting the slave and the serf into a wage worker, thus determining a simple change of form, what change of form is he referring to?

The slave and the serf are forced laborers because of their bonds of personal dependence. But what happens to them when this process of primitive accumulation turns them into doubly free workers? They are still forced laborers, but now not because of their relationships of personal dependence, but in their condition as free individuals. So, the first thing that appears is this, and for me it is like a key point in the deployment that Marx is making, because what he is proposing is: here there were individuals who were not free and who now became free individuals, and that is the first freedom of the worker. And that was what appeared, Marx referred to, which was the glorification of the process of primitive accumulation, because it appears as development, the affirmation of human freedom; and what Marx had discovered is that this freedom, by the second freedom of the worker, is the condition of forced labor for capital.

But what he is going to add next, he goes on to say: "primitive accumulation means purely and exclusively the *expropriation of the direct producer, or what is the same, the destruction of private property based on labor*."[333] And what corresponds to private property based on one's own work? It corresponds to a subject who was already free from personal dependence but did not have the second freedom: he was a private owner, he was linked to his means of production and means of living. And then, what is going to appear as the axis of development is what happened to that individual who was already free, what did capital transform, in the development of the capitalist mode of production, with respect to that individual who was already free, by separating him from his means of production and turning him into a direct producer who was doubly free? And then, what Marx is going to unfold, the figure that is going to be linked to this is the peasant, owner of his land and who works his land, the artisan who is the owner of his instrument of production and manages that instrument of production and organizes his work.

So what is it going to look like? Here is not the question that he was transformed into a free individual, and at the same time into a doubly free individual, but that he was already a free individual. What happens to him when he becomes doubly free, what does this transformation entail? And so, what Marx is unfolding is to what material form of labor, to what organization of the materiality of labor corresponds that free individual, private owner of his means of production. And what he is going to propose is: this is small agriculture, small artisanal, industrial production. And he says: even though servitude and slavery continued to exist living with these free individuals, the classic expression of this situation of the direct producer who is the private owner of his means of production is the figure of the free artisan and the free peasant.

I am going to make an observation that is beyond what Marx proposes, linked to this that here is the figure in its purity. A society of simple commodity producers, of free artisans and free peasants, both private owners of their means of production, always requires the existence of some kind of direct personal link in order to affirm its unity; because this relationship between free direct producers clashes precisely with the private and independent functioning of social labor. And

[333] Marx, K. (1977: 647), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

then, when one looks at the community of peasants who are free owners of the land, in general, what appears is that, in any case, they are tributaries, they have to pay what we saw in the process of dissolution: there are taxes; all the political structures that correspond to the stage of development of primitive accumulation in Europe are all of a monarchical character, where unity is established through a bond of personal dependence. It may be that there are portions where they are not, but in general this appears, and it appears very clearly among the free artisans, because they are associated in guilds; and the guild, first, regulates who can produce, how they have to produce, how much they can produce, and then, through the bond of personal belonging to the guild, the general movement is governed.

And this has to do (here I should not have mentioned it) with when we saw chapter III of this volume, and the situation appeared in which unity is established indirectly, and it may be that more or less quantity of a commodity has been produced than what corresponds to normality. And what Marx is going to develop at that point is simply the content of how that situation is governed, but not the form, unlike what Adam Smith does. Adam Smith proposes this: if there is a surplus of this commodity, then the producers of this commodity are going to start producing another commodity and if from this lack they are going to be interested in producing it. And Marx does not develop in this way; and it does not do so because that form is competition, and between simple producers of commodities it is very difficult to move from one production to another, because the individual who produces shoes has the means of production and the knowledge to produce shoes, and if there are shoes left over, he cannot start producing bread. We are only going to see the forms of this movement when we reach Volume 3, where it will appear what governs the unity of the process of social life, and then how production moves from one side to the other, governed by this expression of unity.

So, one always has to keep this in mind: Marx takes it as if they were purely free individuals, but in the concrete historical movement the figure is not so crystalline in this, but the question is substantial that there is the key to what primitive accumulation does: formally, it transforms forced laborers into another form of forced laborer. to individuals who were already free; What does it transform with respect to the materiality of the production process? And this is what is going to appear here. So, to make that deployment, he is going to refer to what characterizes production in a society of free producers who are private owners of their means of production.

And what he says is: this presupposes, first, the fragmentation of the land, the fragmentation of all the means of production; there is no room for any process of direct cooperation, an absolute division of labor is imposed between the parts of each production process; and, therefore, this form of organization of social production, what it is going to pose is what things it excludes: it excludes the possibility of cooperation, the division of labor *within* the production process itself, and the development of the productive forces that spring from the directly social character of labor. We, at the outset, saw that the productive forces of labor are first of all social productive forces: they are the product of social labor that are carried in the body of each individual in the form of the individual productive

forces. And so, if we look at the society of free direct producers, what we have is the fullness of the productive forces of individual labor, because the individual governs the organization and execution of his labor, he has full control over his individual labor, but what happens is that he cannot set in motion any labor power that he requires, or that it has a direct social character. He cannot cooperate with other individuals.

We saw that in the process of cooperation the productive power of labor increases, because one learns from the work of others, because one cooperates with others. And the other condition that will appear linked to this is that there is no room for the development of science, and therefore, there is no possibility of collectively dominating nature. And then, what he is going to propose is: to pretend that this form of society is eternal, a limited form of the development of the productive forces of labor – he is going to quote an author who, I have no idea who he was and who says: it is like decreeing general mediocrity.

What he is going to develop next is how, from this very movement of the productive forces, from these individual free labors, how the development of these productive forces are going to advance and they are going to clash with their own movement, they are going to create the bases for their own supersession. And what is the way to overcome the limits of production based on the purely individual labor of the private owners of the means of production? It is the possibility of collective labor, of cooperating directly while maintaining the productive forces of free labor, maintaining the productive attributes of the free producer. And the only way to be able to convert these productive forces of individual free labor into productive forces of free labor carried out collectively is the abolition of private property over the means of production themselves; And this means: transforming the means of production into means of production, from being simply individual, to means of production that can operate with an immediately social character. The way to achieve this development of the productive forces is the abolition of private ownership over the means of production themselves, the concentration of private property over these means of production in this few hands, and the transformation, consequently, of these free producers into doubly free ones, separated from their means of production and their means of subsistence. And so what Marx is going to propose is: this is what the process of primitive accumulation tends to as the starting point of the capitalist mode of production. Are we up to here?

Edgardo: One thing. So, these free individuals who continue to have private property over their own means of production, are a presupposition of the capitalist mode of production, that is, they are not part of the capitalist mode of production.

JIC: They are the origin, or Marx is going to put it in the terms of: it is the prehistory of the capitalist mode of production.

Edgardo: That causes me a bit of noise, because I relate that if affirming this, it does not enable the idea that there existed in history a society of simple commodities, as Engels called it.

JIC: Yes, from simple producers in commodities. I don't know whether to stop now, or look at it as the questions that we are going to have in front of us at the end of the chapter. I have that doubt, because it is going to take us a lot, but well, I try to move forward in what is proposed.

I have always – and for me, in the end, it is the most relevant thing – I considered this as the content of primitive accumulation. What was the content of the process of primitive accumulation? That it does not matter whether this is the concrete historical process or not. And so I once discussed it at a congress with a Marxist historian who questioned Marx by saying: there were no free peasants, that was not the general form of the organization of social production, so Marx was wrong (moreover, he started with that). And I jumped [laughs]. I think I told you that Nicolás Grinberg, who is part of the Center[334], was looking at the historical process beyond the capitalist mode of production, and looking at the concrete forms, apparently in England, in several European countries, but in particular in England, there was a significant part of the population that met these conditions. You have to think that all the crafts of feudal society, all urban crafts in particular, had these characteristics. And the peasant craftsmanship, it is possible that these characteristics had a significant part.

There are the processes, defeated many times, but of an uprising of the communards in Spain, which would imply that there was a certain... It is fine, at the same time, the defeat of these movements gives rise to a very strong submission to the monarchical and seigneurial structure; But it is possible that much of this has been transformed into tributes into money, and that the tributes into money actually already appear with the conditions of commodity production by a producer who in that case is not yet personally free, but who already has the general attributes of the commodity producer: it has to resolve what it produces, how it produces, how much it produces, how it transforms that which produced money... Consequently, it has to enter into a general social bond, with which...

Randy: But, excuse me Juan, wouldn't we go into what the classical economy of the worker who saved says, precisely? Wouldn't we be half touching that figure, because we could think of the subject who is, in a certain way, criticizing, the subject with whom primitive accumulation begins, which is this figure who by his own work generates savings, and is it like a proto-capitalist who constitutes himself as a capitalist, is that not precisely what Marx is criticizing?

JIC: You're criticizing that and you're showing that, in reality, that process of supposed saving... This is the expropriated, the one that vulgar economics, now in the form of neoclassical economics, presents as the origin of the capitalist, what Marx is showing himself is that this is the origin of the worker: the one who had private property over his means of production was expropriated. And when he is making the concrete development, what appears are the origins, he makes this observation: not all the serfs are freed in the same conditions, nor do they all have the same resources; and that puts him as one of the origins of the tenant, of the tenant capitalist. If there is someone who has the means of production, who can

[334] The CICP.

begin to use purchased labor power, etc., and becomes the tenant. But what he is going to propose is: this is the general movement, which is the other way around. The guys who were workers and had the greatest productive attributes because of their condition as free individuals, are the ones from whom private property over their means of production is wrested.

I return to what Edgardo proposed. So, for me this was always relevant in particular: this is the content, it may not necessarily be the concrete form, but it is the content of the process. This is what shows me what the capitalist mode of production does as a historical mode of production, what is the specificity of the capitalist mode of production. Now: with respect to the proposal of the existence of a previous production of simple commodities, which is posed as a distortion introduced by Engels... In Volume 3 there is a paragraph by Marx, it is in the originals, it is in the drafts, and it says verbatim that the production of commodities is the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production. I don't have it registered or cited anywhere, so it's very unlikely that I'll be able to find it. But here it appears verbatim said by Marx: here there is an organization of social production based on the private ownership of the means of production themselves, and this is what was transformed or this is the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production. The only thing that Engels can be accused of having done with that paragraph is that he changed its place, but the paragraph is, so it is not simply something added by Engels, it is a statement by Marx. And if we take up the development that we have been doing, what appeared to us was that the development of the value form is the historical development of the commodity form. And when he looks at the development of the value form, what appears is how the commodity is converted into money, and so on.

When he begins to look at accumulation in chapter IV, he is already looking at capital as a subject; But what he is going to take is: what determines the value of labor power? Well, what the worker needs to live. And where does that worker come from? He comes from being a producer of commodities. Because it is not that the serf became a worker, he is someone who was already linked to the production of commodities. He even says: it depends on historical conditions... It comes to what production technique the worker uses, and the technique, when the development appears already in chapter V of the labor process, the labor process is of a worker who comes with the productive attributes of being a free individual, and up to that point there is no specific reference to the technique of the capitalist process of production itself. except that he ends the labor process by saying: he does all this, but now he does it under the control of the capitalist. And from there it goes on to the valorization process.

So, one is faced with... Even the length of the working day appears initially as given, and capital tries to prolong it. Now: is it whose working day's length? It is not the serf's, who works, in agricultural production, it is not the slave's: it is the commodity-producer's. And for me (well, tomorrow I'm going to see if I have time to put it that way), when Marx is developing the process... And it is very marked in the draft published as "Chapter VI unpublished", it is very much posed like this, and I have it in mind because Veraza clings to this a lot, not because he says that this is the historical origin, but because it is very much posed with: these are the

production of this direct producer and capital advances on these conditions. And so, my proposal is: in chapter IV capital already appears as a subject, but it is a subject that is not yet ... The aim of the whole process, of the process of social production, is the multiplication of capital. When the production of absolute surplus value appears, capital asserts itself as a subject, but it is a subject that does not set its own conditions: the conditions come from the previous social form. And when we move on to relative surplus value, what Marx puts in the transition from formal subsumption to real subsumption, what appears is that capital is the subject that sets all its conditions, that determines the productive techniques through the socialization of private labor, that determines the duration of the day according to the intensity of labor. and that when it continues to advance – this is already in the part of reproduction – what appears is that the worker, the working class, is an attribute of capital, all the conditions of its movement are set by capital. And this is the subject we arrive at in the end.

So the question is: to what extent was Marx not really looking at that process as the process...? Sorry: when it enters into relative surplus value, it enters with cooperation, which is that the work continues to be done as before. Who? The craftsman who worked alone in his workshop, only now he is set to work together with others. From simple cooperation, Marx starts, and arrives at a complex cooperation in which a collective worker all works on the same object of work. And that is the step to the division of labor in manufacturing. And Marx is going to speak in different places of a manufacturing stage, and when he is developing manufacturing, what he is going to propose in a moment is the reduction of all human movement by grasping the tool to a mechanical movement, what emerges is the machinery. And then, the form of cooperation and transformation in the materiality of work with the development of machinery. So, even in that exposition, within the capitalist mode of production... When I start, I always say: at the starting point history is as a result: this is the capitalist mode, these are the commodities of the capitalist mode of production. And then, the general deployment that Marx makes, when a historical process appears, is the interior of the capitalist mode of production.

But when one looks at all this development at Marx's statement in Volume 3 that the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production is the simple production of commodities, it begins to seem that Marx must have been looking at the process in this way. For me, whether he was looking at it like that or not, to me... First, I could never answer whether I looked at it that way or not, if it does not have the organicity that is always present in the process of historical development. For me it is not what is relevant, what is relevant is the content of this transformation: the content of individual free labour into collectively made free labour, the socialisation of individual free labour within the limits of the capitalist mode of production, within the limit of the private character of labour. Well, then this, this would be the answer to what you were proposing, Edgardo, I regret not being able to have the exact sentence, it is a text, it is a body of text, it is not simply an isolated statement, but it has a certain development. It also has a Latin word, that it is the... It's not the budget, it's the, it's not the "primus", but it's something like that. It's not a "premise", but... It will be useless for me to deal with it... I resign. Edgardo, I don't know if with this...

Edgardo: Yes.

JIC: I am going to make another clarification later linked to this that reinforces the image that for Marx the unity of this process as a process of historical development was relevant, and there are other reasons that we will talk about later when we complete the development that Marx makes, which is the possibility of not having stopped at the original accumulation and making the complete development. without looking at the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production; but at the same time it lacks something, but let's look at that later. Fernando, did you want to raise?

Fernando: Yes, in reality a series of questions that generate doubts for me about the historical development that is put there, more than anything, not about the content of the proposal, which as you said is what is relevant, and it is what ultimately does not deny the doubts that appear to me. Because it is the same, only the issue is what there were the origins, but it is the same transformation that develops the capitalist mode of production. But I say, this society of simple producers of commodities, a first question I have is whether, in addition to the fact that it has to exist, we are going to put it like this, within the productive processes, some link of personal dependence that establishes unity, because if not, there cannot be a transfer, let's say, of the different productions with the change of means of production in the environment; if that, in addition, does not have the limitation that it cannot be generalized all branches of production activity, because if not, the total unity, the general unity, would be established by the decision of the unions. Do you understand the issue?

JIC: No, no, that's why: the general unity has some structure, that's why I made the proposal of monarchical structures, and it's the development in addition to... Nicolás was looking at him that too. I think the problem there is that you have to be very careful not to see things that you *would like to* see and that in reality do not exist, and to stop development, and that is complicated to look at that historical process. But yes, there are general units. That is why I am not very clear when the Swiss cantons will become independent, because that is a society that today carries with it the aspects of a society of simple producers of commodities.

Fernando: But it is not the only one, because what appears as the "free cities" in Italy is something similar.

JIC: Yes, but the free cities in Italy have a strong commercial character, and it is quite possible that some of the commodities circulating in those cities are not the products of free workers.

Fernando: Well, that's exactly what I was going for. Because what I was seeing, from some things that I was reading, first makes me generate doubt about this question of the establishment of a world unity, from what point capital starts in that, its content is global, but that world unity is established through the form of its opposite, but where does this come from? Because one says: well, the Swiss cantons became independent, but did they have an internal unity or were they part

of a unity that transcended it, that society of free producers? Do you understand the question?

JIC: Yes, but here the problem is the basically inward operation, because it is the unit of production, they are artisans who produced externally. But the thing is if the mercantile relationship operates within that society, then it appears that unity is very difficult to establish and flow.

One can also say: in any case, apart from the guilds, in all of them there are structures of organization of social life in which the individual belongs to the community, it is not that this is open and the organization reaches everyone who is nearby, you have to belong to that community. The question is also how far within the community do commodities circulate, especially since they are societies that except, again, the urban artisans... They are all peasants and artisans, so we have to see what they really buy, how much the commodities circulate within the community. But we would have to look at the concrete historical development.

Fernando: And there is one last question, Juan, that I don't know how frequent this was or how transcendent, but the existence of production of commodities in artisanal workshops with slave labor, and in series, and even with quality sealing.

JIC: We would have to see. Again, how much of that comes from outside the realms where accumulation is going to begin to develop? I don't know. The national workshops seem to me to be later, in France, which is a process of these characteristics, but it seems to me that this is part of the original accumulation, they are already displaced from the land that...

Fernando: Anyway, sorry to interrupt you, what I am telling you is closely linked to these cities with an important presence of commercial capital; in fact everything is quite mixed, and not only in Italy: for example in Barcelona or Flanders there is this situation of merchants who also had artisan workshops with slave labor, Serial work and quality sealing.

JIC: But in that case it is the other transformation to which Marx refers: they were not free and they became free in both senses of the condition. But there it appears as: it does not reveal what powers the transformation of individual free labor into collective free labor has because they were not free. What shows the power is this. Now, how far is this...? I mean, in America it is clear that it is not this process of primitive accumulation. What we saw the other time is far from having this shape. But what happens in America is that it does not generate the process of primitive accumulation by itself. So, where there were free peasants, hunter-gatherers, they were basically annihilated, they are not turned into workers selling labor power. Those who become sellers of labor power are basically subjects of societies where there are ties of personal dependence of a "hierarchical" character, let's say, who have the discipline of collective work even before they become wage workers [...].

Edgardo [Chat]: Has Nicolás published any of that work or is it still in draft?

JIC: I think Nicolás still had it in a state of elaboration that requires a lot of care not to jump. I made a series of observations about the proposal, I find the work very interesting, but it seems to me that we have to be careful. I remember what you said, Edgardo, last time, about the observations of the development of the maquila in northern Mexico, not because of the proximity of the border, but as if it came from the history of peoples disciplined for collective work, and it seems to me that this is a leap that one cannot take. It would be necessary to have it seen very clearly in order to be able to pose a question of this nature because, in mediations, there are several centuries of historical development that do not have the form of work structured. Were you, Fernando, the other day or not?

Fernando: I wasn't there, but I saw the recording.

JIC: Well, so it seems to me that Nicolás' proposal requires a lot of refinement and also a lot of historical evidence. Because if not, one takes points in which what one would like to see appears, but the question is about the unity of all that movement.

Fernando: Based on what Edgardo said last time, in the work we did on Central America we had a limitation that we could not answer, but I suspect that it comes from this side, that at a certain point, Korean textile capitals begin to look for places to establish themselves with a cheaper labor force due to the increase in the cost of Korean labor force. And there is a statement by a CEO of these Korean companies, saying that they were going to set up a maquila-type subsidiary in Guatemala because they found in the Guatemalan peasant the same capabilities and the same attributes that the Korean peasant 40 or 50 years ago did; and this statement was very eloquent. However, one sees the process in Guatemala and sees that the maquila is limited; and as it went further into territory where the indigenous population is more numerous and more closed (there is a large part of the Guatemalan population that does not speak Spanish at all), this limitation appeared that the maquila did not advance. So one wonders if the limitations have to do with this, with the fact that they don't even speak Spanish, or if really those forms of societies that are not exactly the same, the populations of the Yucatan as those of northern Mexico, but if those types of societies had the same attributes of collective work as the tributary peasants of the Korean peninsula. I don't know, it's a doubt that came up in the work we were doing.

JIC: Yes. This is an anecdote and it is going to be a deviation, this is what an Argentine sociologist who specialized in cooperation between peasants saw when he went to Korea. This is from the 70s, early 80s: that here they had to teach the peasants to cooperate, and that in Korea they had to teach them not to cooperate, to have some independence of criteria [Laughter]. Javiera.

Javiera: I have a very specific doubt that has to do with this that they were free from the bonds of personal dependence, because if they already had the discipline of collective work, you saw that there is a part in the...

JIC: Excuse me, Javiera: they didn't have collective work discipline. They didn't have any, because they're independent producers.

Javiera: Come on. That is why Marx in point 3 refers to the fact that they did not manage to have the discipline that was needed at the time they were expelled, as it was difficult for them to insert themselves into the process of big industry, as they are referring to, right? Like that discipline.

JIC: Yes, I would have to see the exact phrase.

Javiera: Yes, it's when you're talking about the bloody law, like the vagabonds.

JIC: Yes, we have to look at that. This is where this appears: during the process of enclosure in England, it is assumed that some of those expelled are serfs, that they do not have the attributes that industry will later need, and that violence is used to transform them into workers. How many of those were free peasants and are in that situation? We would have to look at the concrete historical development, but well, apart from that, we have to think that it is a large mass of the peasant population that has no contact with the work of industry, that at most has artisanal work, beyond whether they were already free or if they were slaves or serfs. So, he imposes discipline on them not simply because they were already free and then they did not have the discipline. In any case, in general, what one has is: all peasant production is a production, even if it is worked for the same lord, which in general has the character of isolated production units where the direct producer, in addition to what ... As a result of this, I raise a question that is in Volume 3.

In Volume 3, when he looks at the historical genesis of capitalist land rent, the transformation of feudal rent into capitalist rent, Marx refers to three stages, which have all the appearance of being historical stages. A first stage is the provision of work, where the peasant has, as a development of his productive forces in comparison with the slave, the need to organize work. The master organizes the work that the slave does for the master and the work that the slave does for himself. With this provision of labour, the servant now has to work for a time in the lord's land, under the lord's command, but he has to work at another time of the year in order to reproduce his own labour-power. And this is a servant's problem, it's not a master's problem. The serf has to manage to arrive with labor power at the moment when he has to perform the work in labor. When one looks at it in America, the mita is not individual, it is a community, but it has that structure. The community has to be in charge of being in a position that a part of it can go to work on the Inca's lands during a certain time of the year, or for a certain number of years. So, the first form that appears is this.

The next form that appears is the tribute in kind, which is a tribute in the use values that the lord is going to consume, basically, because it is what the servant can produce. And here, now the serf, being a laborer forced by his ties of personal dependence, not only has to organize the work for himself, but he also has to organize the work for the master, because it is the servant's problem to deliver the tribute in kind. And the lord, if the servant does not comply with this, can exercise all the personal violence that his bond gives him. And the third form is the tribute in money. This is a subjugated worker, forced by his bond of personal dependence, but now the serf has to behave as if he were a free producer of commodities: he has

to decide what he produces, how much he produces, how he produces, he has to transform those commodities he produces into money, and deliver the tribute to the lord.

And here, what we saw in the specific development that Marx is doing, is the role played by taxes and public debt in the development of primitive accumulation. Because there you have to produce money, you have to have money, and it forces this general transformation of production into commodity production, and it forms a society of commodity producers, either as workers forced by bonds of personal dependence, or because they are free, or whatever, this is the way in which a generalized production of commodities develops. So, when one looks at a massive population of peasants, who are not peasants under large-scale irrigation, because peasants under large-scale irrigation do have the structures of discipline of collective work. But in England there is no large-scale irrigated cultivation. What's more, I suppose that the generality of wheat cultivation at that time was rainfed crops, without irrigation, because they are still regions where, if irrigation appears, it is already an irrigation product of the development of the capitalist mode of production itself, but the images of flood irrigation, of very extensive plains, do not appear. management of the flow of rivers... There are small valleys where it does not lend itself to large-scale work, it lends itself to relatively independent productions, even independent of each other, because the one in the other valley cannot cooperate with the one in this valley. So, this. I don't know Javiera if I answer what your question was or I didn't answer.

Javiera: No, more or less, but look, beyond the concrete forms, what still doesn't quite gel for me is what happens to this subject when he becomes a doubly free worker. So, what I wanted to ask you is that this individual who is free only in this sense of a bond of personal dependence, is an individual who cannot recognize himself as an individual, right?

JIC: I suppose that since there are still links of personal dependence for the general unit, no. To be part of the guild, the guild has a real mercy that gives it a monopoly over this production, in this space... I don't think that... But he is an individual who has full control over his social labor done individually, because he organizes his work when... Okay, once he's inside the guild, the guild tells him a whole series of things, but then making the masterpiece is that individual's problem. I don't know, it seems to me that there is something else underlying your question.

Javiera: No, maybe it's because I'm thinking about South America, now that you said about irrigation, I was thinking about another work structure, that's why I started by telling you that there was a discipline, because indeed, I don't know, the developments in China, Vietnam, it kind of had another structure; this peasantry has a very different form from the one you mention about England, that is: there is a very marked discipline in this collective work, and the same thing that happens in South America. But it generates a lot of doubt in me, I'm going to read it again because no matter how much I listen to it, it doesn't solve it, as it generates a lot of doubt that he is an individual free of personal dependence, because I see the tax, I see these aspects and I don't...

JIC: Think about this: what Marx is proposing is that he is the private owner of his own means of production, this is the condition he has, hence his condition as a free individual. What did we see of a free individual when we started? He has full control over his individual work, over his social labor that he does individually, that is the figure that is starting. It doesn't matter how you look, but you have that control, it depends on your individual will what you are going to produce, how you are going to organize production and so on; and this is the figure that Marx is taking as a historical figure and that one can recognize as a historical figure, one can also recognize it as the figure of the subject of the capitalist mode of production whose development has been accompanying up to this point.

The simplest determination of private labor is an individual who has private ownership of his own means of production, because only in this way is the absolute purity of private labor. Any other structure of production implies that labor can no longer be absolutely private, even in relation to what I said before about the forms of servile tribute, that when it is still in kind, it cannot have full control of its labor process, because what it is that it is going to produce is still going to be determined by the master. But when it is a tribute in money, it already has all the conditions proper to the fullness of private labor. He is an independent private producer, with this exception that he is not yet an individual free of personal dependence, but he is already the full expression of social labor done privately. Any other step that is taken in the development of collective work is a socialization, it ceased to be the fullness of private labor.

So, one can look at this process (in fact, it is how I tend to look at it): we start with the purity of social labor done privately, and what we find is that the development of the capitalist mode of production, what it does is socialize that private labor. But in the first step, which we move from chapter III to chapter V, there is already a socialization of private labor. It is no longer the purity of private labor. When Marx makes this transition, he is describing the labor process as a labor process in general, of an individual who handles the tools with the fullness of mastery over the tool, which corresponds to the artisan producer of commodities. When the whole description of the labor process appears and suddenly it appears: well, but what is different about it is that the control of the capitalist works; there is already a socialization of that private labor. Because now there is an organ of social production that is not an individual organ: there is an organ in which one directs and the other executes the process. Neither the worker has full control over the work he does, nor does the capitalist have full individual control over the work he puts into operation, because it is not his, it depends on what the worker does, on the will of the worker, in the sense that he is the one who is going to move the tool. And then, there is already a social organ of production that works privately and independently, and all that comes from the development of relative surplus value is the fullness of that process of socialization. We leave it there, then we try to make the synthesis of this. Yes, Fernando, did you want to raise something?

Fernando: Yes. This, a little simplified perhaps, but what the development of the feudal mode of production through these three forms of tribute does is to reach the fullness of private labor (I'll throw this one, let's see what you think) in the form of

the means of production gradually passing into the hands of the direct producer, it is the reverse way. I mean, in the tribute in labor, a part of the principal means of production, which is the land, and of the tools, belonged to the lord: the serf operated on that part under the control of the lord, but those means of production did not belong to him. When the tribute becomes in kind – we have to look at the issue of private property, but I say – since the organization of his labor process has to be organized by him, the control of all those means of production is in his hands. And the tribute in money adds the necessary means of production of the part of the production process that means converting those commodities into money, that is, it has to have the way to transport those commodities to the nearest market. And that also passes into the hands of the serf, that is, it is a process that seems to be the opposite of what the capitalist mode of production does, which socializes the private one.

JIC: Yes, it is the development of an individual private labor.

Fernando: Sure. That it comes, that it comes from a collective work organized in a centralized way, half complicated.

JIC: There we would have to see where it comes from, because it comes from different historical origins. We would have to see, that's why it's problematic, among other things because of this. Here appears private property over the means of production themselves. For the peasant, private property, his main means of production is land. And one thinks of the French Revolution, which what it did was to give the land to the peasants, so that those peasants did not have private property over the land. Then, a form appears that when it is fragmented as private property, they become producers of commodities who do individual work, that is why the peasants are all absolutely isolated, some of them...

Fernando: The bag of potatoes.

JIC: I don't know why the bag of potatoes.

Fernando: It's a phrase from Marx in I don't remember...

Javiera: *The 18th Brumaire [of Napoleon Bonaparte]*.

JIC: So, that's why when you look at that you say: in France there wasn't this figure just like that. Now, when he looks at the structure of the French nobility centered in Versailles, then he says: surely the tribute had to be money.

Fernando: Well, but that's why: one can make a distinction there between private property and, although private property is not formally owned by the direct producer, its use and the organization of those means of production is.

JIC: Yes, yes, there he is describing a specific production structure. That is why I return to the matter: for me the question is the content of that movement, beyond the diversity of concrete forms. I know of historians who have these fights: one looks here and says: "No, this happens, this and this happens. It is not true that the

process has had this form," so the other one looks here and says: "No, but here yes, this, this and this happens..." And there is a diversity of enormously large concrete forms. Therefore, for me what matters is what this transformation puts in front of me. If I look at the one who was a servant, what appears to me is that the only thing he did was to make him a free individual. If I look at an individual who says, "This was a free individual," what it did was to turn him into an individual with productive forces proper to the free individual who can now cooperate. What is the condition? To have separated it from the means of production. If the origin of the free individual is to be the private owner of his own means of production, the condition for his co-operation is to wrest from him the means of production and the means of subsistence: then he has no choice but to cooperate. And now, when you look at cooperation, you see how it is progressing more and more in this process of socialization of private labor. We will continue a little later, because this is going to give rise to a lot of questions.

And then, what is going to appear is expropriated; abolished this private property based on one's own work, and transformed into capitalist private property, where the centralization of that property is possible, where the process of development of collective work fits, and that process could only take place through violence, what it is going to propose is that it destroys private property based on one's own work and does not abolish private property, but it transforms that private property into capitalist private property, which if one was based on the direct participation of the private owner in the labor process, now became a private property based on the exploitation of the labor of others, a labor of others that did not become slave or serf, but retains the attributes of free labor, because he became a doubly free individual.

Javiera: Can I ask a small question there? There, in the translation, the phrase "founded on the exploitation of other people's labor, although *formally* free" appears to me.

JIC: Yes, let me see how it is in another translation. He is a forced laborer, you don't have to... In FCE there is also the "formally free" thing[335]. What we already know is that this worker is a forced labor for capital, but he is not a forced labor in the form of his personal dependence: the form of his condition as a forced labor is that he is a free individual. Since he is free in the private sector to be the private owner of his own labor power and to be separated from the means of production and the means of subsistence, that makes him a forced laborer for capital. And in what we saw before, it is not for this or that individual capitalist: it is a forced worker for social capital, for some individual capital, it does not matter which.

Now—I am going to put it very briefly, which Marx does even more briefly than I do—what is it that is unleashed by this transformation, by this abolition of private property based on one's own labor and by private property based on the gratuitous appropriation of the product of other people's labor (capitalist property)? All the productive forces that enclose socialization are set in motion, which spring from the socialization of labor, the transformation of the means of

[335] Marx, K. (1977: 648), *Capital*, Volume 1. Mexico City: FCE.

production into means of production put into operation with a social character, that is, as collective means of production. And so, what Marx is going to propose is: a new process of expropriation of the private owners arises, but now it is no longer the expropriation of the producer, of the independent worker, but the expropriation of the expropriating capitalist by numerous workers. And what it will continue to develop is: this expropriation, above all, develops due to the very dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. The first form of expropriation is the process of centralization of capital, where a capitalist expropriates a set of capitalists. The centralization of capital, the technical application of science, the scientific organization of production on earth is becoming more and more widespread, all the means of labor are becoming means that can only be used collectively, it is going to extend it to the countries, saying that it is the development of the world market and the international character of the capitalist mode of production.

And so, all of this, on the one hand, has created the... So far it is looked at from the point of view, so to speak, of capital, what was happening with the transformation of all the conditions of production into social conditions. But what he is going to contrast with this is: just as all this centralization of capital takes place—and one has to take it as Marx puts it—"[...] the mass of misery, oppression, enslavement" is growing" – it is in a figurative sense – "of the degeneration, of the exploitation" of the working population, "but the rebellion of the working class is also growing, more and more numerous and more disciplined, more united and more organized"[336] by the same laws that govern the movement of capital. by the same process of centralization of capital. And so what he is going to propose is: now this monopoly on the social conditions of production, hinders, negates the process that it had been deploying, and imposes a... Give the process of production and the means of production a fully social character, and consequently, he says, the final hour of capitalist private property has come, and what takes place is the expropriation of the expropriators.

And it's going to make this development. What he is going to say is—he makes a figure with this—: capitalist appropriation is the first negation of private property, it is individual private property that is based on one's own labor. What is it that the capitalist mode of production engenders by its own development? It engenders the negation of the negation. And he says: the negation of the negation of private property does not regenerate individual private property, but, on the basis of the socialization of the means of production and the development of all these aspects of the production process that he proposed earlier, the development of science... What it will give rise to is individual property that is based on the social character of labor, on cooperation and collective possession of the land and the means of production that are products of labor.

So, in the first place, what one has to notice here is that it does not say "there is a collective property", it says: there is an individual property that is based on the collective process of production. And then, it is going to close development (to do it like this, quickly) with this expression, saying: what does capital do? Expropriating

[336] Ibid.

the mass of the people is a slow, long and more difficult process than the transformation of capitalist property that is already based on the immediately social character of production, into social property. And it will close with the figure that, if in that expropriation that transforms private property based on one's own work into private property based on the free appropriation of the work or the product of the labor of others, and the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few expropriators was implied, here, on the contrary, it is the expropriation of those expropriators by the mass of the people. And that was the end of the chapter of primitive accumulation, and we practically reached the end of what we are going to see today.

Javiera: Why is it individual property and not social property?

JIC: It is an individual property based on the social character of the property. Because it is not an abstractly social property: each individual is an individual organ within that process of collective property, and therefore, he is an owner of those means of production, they are not alien to him, individually they belong to him, but they belong to him as an individual organ of the process of social life. So, it is the affirmation of the fullness of human individuality as a social subject, it is not the annihilation of individuality. The ideological image is that the annihilation of private property appears as the annihilation of free individuality; The discourse that is heard every day in all our national spaces, particularly today, is: well, private property is annihilated, the individual is dissolved in the masses, he has lost his individual identity; And what he is proposing here is: no, it is the full affirmation of individuality that knows itself to be the individual organ of a social unit. So, I understand that this is what this reaffirmation of individual property refers to.

Fernando (Chat): Is that why it would be affirming oneself through the negation of one's own negation?

JIC: I would have to think about it, if in this, what is affirmed by the very negation of the negation itself, it is the capitalist mode of production that engenders the possibility of this form of property. Marx poses it more immediately as if there is a negation here, and here is the negation of the negation. If that negation of the negation... What he is going to propose, so I doubt that it can be looked at simply like this, is: this is the negation of private property based on one's own work, it does not say that it is the negation of individual property. Now what is coming is the negation of the negation of that based on one's own work. Now what is coming is the negation of the negation of that private property based on one's own work. What he says is that it does not replace private property: it surpasses private property. Now, we would have to think very carefully about whether this implied here, beyond what is textually stated, that this was individual property based on one's own work, and capitalism is also individual property, based on the exploitation of the labor of others, and here what reappears is individual property.

Fernando: But sorry, Juan, denying oneself through denial or denial itself, maybe that's the problem, I'm not quite understanding it, but wouldn't that be the flow of the same quality?

JIC: I, first, wouldn't take it as literally as...

Fernando: Is the quantitative determination of the same quality or not?

JIC: But this one is not quantitative. You have to remember that Marx said that he had flirted with Hegel's terminologies and I don't know what. Let's look at it in all this development; It's a very thick development, but let's leave it for next time. Wondering about subtleties in that gross development can be quite complicated, but it may be that you are right, that it is intended as a negation, but notice that it is not the negation of the negation with respect to quantitative determination, it is not a problem of quantitative determination.

Fernando: No, no, for me Marx is talking about a qualitative change, that's why I was surprised by the reference.

JIC: But it's like saying... It's not... Here there is a negation of this, now this is the negation of that which denied the previous one. First, there is no expression of *affirmation* through negation. This is the denial of private property based on one's own labor. Now this is the abolition of private property based on the free appropriation of the product of the labor of others. What did he do? That change in the form of ownership arrived. But what does it add? It does not replace private property, it replaces individual property that has the character of an immediately social property.

Fernando: Well, it doesn't close me, but I'll replace it next time.

JIC: We have two meetings left, if I'm not mistaken, so let's use that one to discuss. I want to ask you, as we looked, what happened with... I put it in these terms. Here Marx speaks of the discipline of the working population, of the misery of the working population... The working population that we left behind, strictly following Marx's development, is a working population that had been degrading its condition as the subject of the labor process: it had been standing next to the machine, etc. And then, it also appears as a leap that now this population is in a position to take into its hands the entire organization of the process of social life; not even in a process of social life where the fragmentation of social production by private property is mediated and therefore unity is established autonomously, but now unity is set as the starting point of that social production.

And so I wanted, first, to dwell on this; second, to look at even if it is very much above a development that Marx makes in the *Grundrisse*, where he begins to move in another direction, and then it is as if that development is diluted, which contrasts strongly with the approach that exists in *Capital*, and then one has to ask why, what role this change plays. And then, to look at what we see of the transformation of the materiality of work with respect to this movement. If what we look at in the development of the materiality of work – let's put it that way, in

loose terms – "closes" the gap left by that leap that exists, of totally unskilled workers, a mass of surplus working population, increasingly miserable, because that is: at one pole the accumulation of wealth, at the other pole the accumulation of misery, That is the closure of the general law of capitalist accumulation. Well, how does this potentiality arise and what forms would this full socialization of work take? See you on Wednesday.

[Summary of Chapter XXIV]

I make a synthesis of what we had proposed as far as we had gone last time. We had come to the end of chapter XXIV with Marx's development of what primitive accumulation does beyond changing the way in which slaves and serfs were forced laborers because of their bonds of personal dependence, and now the doubly free worker is a forced laborer for the total capital of society precisely because of this double freedom. And then, what we are going to look at is what capital does with the labor of individuals who were already free by separating them from their means of production.

Thus, the figure of these free individuals is the free peasant and artisan of feudal society; especially, it appears in the figure as a mass of free peasants, who at the same time produce other use values by hand. And what does this imply? The fragmentation of landed property, because the condition for being a free individual in the first sense of the word, and not in the second, is to have private ownership over one's own means of production, and since these independent producers of commodities can only perform work of an individual character, their social labour has the character of purely individual labour. they cannot cooperate with each other, they cannot add their labour power directly, and capital, by expropriating their means of production, leaving them without the possibility of producing commodities on their own, makes them doubly free, violently forces them to sell their labour power.

And in this process, what is going to unfold then is the possibility of cooperation, the development of science, the basis for the development of scientific knowledge; this is what Marx synthesizes by saying: to pretend the eternalization of this form of society (he quotes, if I remember correctly, someone), is to decree general mediocrity. Well, then this separation is giving way to the socialization of work, within the private character of work, and in the development that Marx is going to make it appears that on this basis, at the same time that social wealth is developed on the scale that is proper to the capitalist mode of production, at the other pole misery develops. consequently rebellion, the resistance of the workers, the relationship of solidarity for collective work...

And then, at a certain point, he reproduces what is in the prologue to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: the relations of production clash with the development of the productive forces, the time has come for the expropriation of the expropriators, but this does not replace private property... Sorry: that first expropriation, the capitalist one, is the transformation of private property based on one's own work, into private property based on the free appropriation of the product of the labor of others; what Marx is going to propose

is: but now private property based on individual labor itself is not replaced, but it is individual property as immediately social property. And that this is a much easier process to develop than the first one... that this is the negation of the negation of private property, the absolute overcoming of private property, and that this is a much faster, much easier process, because before it was a question of expropriating the mass of the people, and now the other way around: it is that the mass of the people has to expropriate a few expropriators. And there ends chapter XXIV.

I don't know if they want to raise something about that journey. To make it clearer, I would propose this. If you want to propose something about that journey, as the journey is, we will stop at that. If we go beyond the journey, what I propose to you is, let us look very quickly at chapter XXV and then retrace the whole journey, or let us ask ourselves again about this journey that Marx makes and submit it to criticism. So, do you want to raise something?

Fernando: I was left, Juan, with the end of last time, which was the phrase of the negation of the negation of... I don't remember well how Marx put it there. Anyway, I think he understood what the point was about, but since it was very late... we can take it a second to see if it clarifies the situation a little.

JIC: It is this: private property based on one's own work is the affirmation of private property. The private property proper to capital is the negation of that private property. The directly social ownership of the means of production is the negation of capitalist private property, which in turn is the negation of private property based on one's own labor. He says: but it does not replace, it is no longer an affirmation of private property, but it surpasses private property. In that sense it is posed as the negation of the negation. I was reading something by Hegel as a result of what we talked about in the workshop, and it is this, it is put like this: this is the negation of the negation, but capitalist private property is an affirmation in itself that unfolds until it negates itself, because it is not that the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production does not spring from the very movement of the capitalist mode of production. So, it is the capitalist mode of production that affirms itself by producing the working class with discipline and solidarity, with growing misery and rebellion, with discipline of work, and [it is not][337] that something comes from outside that changes it. All this, the productive forces that are carried in this movement, have their fullest expression in the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, it is the affirmation of the capitalist mode of production that denies itself.

Alejandro [Chat]: Could it be that the dissolution of personal ties of vassalage mutates into capitalist private property or does it necessarily appear as mediation in the figure of the free peasant and artisan?

My question, I think I posed it badly written, points to this: this is the same thing that you are just talking about about the negation of the negation, and that well, there is private property, the artisan and the free peasant, and then with all the

[337] I imagine he meant this.

upheaval that there is in the relations of production, with the expropriation of the majority of those who were previously artisans and peasants, the enclosure of the lands and so on, and capitalist private property appears. Now, my question is whether this private property of the artisan and the peasant necessarily has to appear in order for capitalist private property to be reached in its own development. I don't know if I'm explaining myself. Because at one point, before the first part of the chapter, Marx clarifies that although he takes England as an example, he has his nuances in each country, let's say.

JIC: Yes. Wait, I'm trying to remember what the name of the... Because this has two aspects that I don't know if they are in what you propose or not. We saw one of those issues last time. To what extent is this expropriation of the free peasant and the free artisan from feudal society a universal form of the development of primitive accumulation or do they simply show the essence of primitive accumulation? Marx presents it as: this is the concrete historical process; After having looked at a whole series of questions where the displacement of serfs, the processes of enclosure, their transformation into forced laborers through the figure of serfdom, of the transhumant masses, of the expulsion of peasants from the land, etc., but is linked to feudal lords to a large extent, and peasants who are not private owners of their land, because that is why the feudal lord can expel them.

To what extent, then, does the concrete historical process imply that massively, let's take it this way, the "origin" of industrial capital—because this is the fullness of the development of the capitalist mode of production—is based on a mass of the people who were peasants and artisans who were private owners of their means of production? Something that is to be discussed, I mentioned last time the work that Nicolás Grinberg was doing, raising the weight of these peasants in...

[...] So, one can look at it from that point of view, if this is concrete historical development, and there are discussions about concrete historical development. There are historians who say that feudal society was not a society of free peasants and free artisans en masse, there was, but it is not the whole of that society, most of them were serfs and slaves (to take it in immediate terms) even looking at Europe. Now, I look at it, I always looked at it: more than as a historical development, for me what is being raised there is what is the key to what primitive accumulation does; it is to transform a free producer who can only work individually, into a free producer with the attributes of the work of a free producer, who can cooperate. That if what seems to have changed for the serf is the formal aspect of what a forced worker is like, from the point of view of the free peasant and the free artisan, where there is no first freedom as transformation because they were already free, what we see is what the capitalist mode of production really does, which is that transformation of individual free labor into collective free labor within the limits of (to put it externally up to this point) of private property, of the private character of labor. But I would like to go later.

I don't know if we talked about this last time or not, if we talked about it and I'm going to repeat myself, let me know. If one looks at the unity of Volume 1, the things that appear, and then goes on to look at questions of historical development

in Volume 3 in particular, the historical genesis of landed property, the historical genesis of interest-bearing capital, the historical genesis of merchant's capital, references of this kind reappear several times. For me... I say: the image is that for Marx, this is concrete historical development, beyond the fact that this is the key, this is history itself, it is present from the beginning of Volume 1 with the simple producer of commodities, who in reality is that free artisan or peasant from feudal society. And when Marx says that the development of the forms of value is the development of the commodity form, he does not say "historical" there, he says thus: and in reality, the development of the commodity form is money; and the development of the money form, which is the development of the commodity form, is the development of capital; and the development of capital is, when you look at the production of absolute surplus value... This is what I raised the other day.

What appears is: the original worker of capital accumulation is an independent producer of commodities. The figure he takes there has the attributes of a commodity producer, and he is going to describe the labor process as the labor process that is a commodity producer. And he is going to make the transition to the process of valorization by saying: well, the only difference so far is that this work is done under the control of the capitalist. And then, what appears is that if until now the direct producer had full control over his individual work, he no longer has it: he shares it with... I say: there is a collective, the capitalist and the worker constitute a collective, an asymmetrical collective, where one has the function of organizing work and the other has the function of executing immediate work. And there is (I was looking for it the other day but I didn't find it, I would have to look for it again) that paragraph where Marx literally says that commodity production is the historical origin of the capitalist mode of production. [...] So, if Marx didn't look at it that way, these categorical statements that in reality this is Engels' nonsense and that Marx never said it... Marx says it verbatim in one of his drafts. So, I come back to one thing.

If I look at this, I say: whether this was the real historical development or not the real historical development, if for Marx this was a question, for me it is not a question. What matters to me is... It was shocking to me, so to speak, the first time I read this and recognized this proposal. To say: but this is the transformation of form, what matters is the transformation of content, this is what shows me the historical role of the capitalist mode of production. So, whether this has been historical or non-historical development, from my point of view (but it is a personal question, invalid in general) he did not answer me anything, what he answered me was to say: here is the key, the axis of the question.

Well, then this. I don't know, Alejandro, if your intervention has another component, which is the proposal made by Marx, and which seems to have been very difficult for him to answer, when Vera Zasulich raises the question of whether the Russian commune can pass to a society based on the collective ownership of the means of production, if it can make that transition without going through the capitalist mode of production. And Marx writes several drafts, I don't know if at the end there is a definitive letter or not, I don't remember. One can presume (this is pure speculation) that you find it quite difficult to give him an answer that would be... Zasulich was of the... I don't know if it was already Russian populism... Of

whether a society could spring up immediately from that commune... not to go through the capitalist mode of production. You have to think that, at the time of writing this query, the liberation of serfs in Russia is from the 1860s, so it was one thing... In Europe, in general, serfdom was abolished much earlier, here it is a relatively recent thing. But in addition, this is the reference to the commune, which is not of serfs, but is precisely of a common agrarian property, on the land, of the direct producers. That I believe has the versions today of the image that the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production can come from the appearance of other ways of organizing social production.

So, I don't know if that issue was at stake. I do not remember Marx's answer well. The drafts show an attempt to encourage, rather than a fully founded development, it seems more like a very abstract manifestation of possibility. I don't know if, Alejandro, this is it, if there was anything else that someone wants to raise... If not, let's go to the last chapter.

Chapter XXV. The modern theory of colonization.

The last chapter is the modern theory of colonization. And what is it that appears there? The chapter on primitive accumulation is how the capitalist mode of production springs from private property based on one's own work. And colonization, which is the development of agricultural colonies, basically — it is not the Spanish conquest of Latin America, it is not the process of colonization that — the reference is to the formation of these agricultural colonies that are based on individual private ownership of one's own means of production. That Marx is going to look at it especially with respect to the United States and that there is a whole development of theoretical approach based on this new form of organization of the life of society that "overcomes" the miseries of the capitalist mode of production, because now the direct producer is a simply free individual.

And what Marx is going to propose throughout the chapter is: in the face of this appearance, that if individual free labor engendered the capitalist mode of production, now the capitalist mode of production is engendering individual free labor. And it's the occupation of territory largely in the northern United States, it's not the process of the southern United States, where... When we made the leap of this acceleration, looking for the first time at primitive accumulation, I referred to this process of private property over the land based on one's own work. It must be remembered that in the nineteenth century these forms still appear in which they are launched as "races" in which the one who arrives at such a lot, becomes the private owner of the lot and begins to do the production on his own.

And what Marx is going to propose is that what is missing there is the movement of capital, that this is the starting point, and that the very march of capital accumulation in those territories is going to end up sweeping away private property based on labor itself. That this private property based on one's own work has served to occupy the territory, to deploy the mercantile organization of production, to exterminate societies where an organization based on direct relations between people ruled; And that, as soon as this form of this colonization process begins to clash and becomes an obstacle to the accumulation of capital, which is incorporated as directly productive capital in the very territory where the colonies operate, accumulation follows the course that I had described as the process of original accumulation, where direct regulation – because you are going to mention the role of the State – puts a brake on that expansion of private property based on one's own work, and it does so violently: there are processes of expropriation by capital from direct producers. And so it is not that the process of world development of capital accumulation can engender this form of production based on private ownership of one's own means of production.

Basically, it is that content, with important historical validity in the mid-nineteenth century, because there was all this discussion, you have to think that the demand of the most classical anarchism is linked to this type of proposal that the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production is the replacement of private property based on one's own work, and in the most classic version it is based on the work itself as an individual work. Later, when anarcho-syndicalism appears, it

appears as a collective work, which is the private property of the workers of each unit of production. But I believe that today, even the proposals that claim that private property based on one's own work, forms of collective property based on direct personal ties and so on, do not see themselves, nor are they theoretically posed as the capitalist mode of production engendering this mode of organization, but are seen as the absolute negation of the capitalist mode of production. Well, with this I consider myself fulfilled with the exposition of chapter XXV unless you want to look at something in particular.

Alejandro: Juan, just a mention, I don't want to cut too much. Simply, that form of private property based on one's own labor, especially in the case of the United States, is still quite idealized, isn't it?

JIC: It plays an ideological role. It's from parts of the United States: in the South and on the West Coast, that doesn't exist. Private ownership of land, moreover, is done in the form of properly capitalist ownership of land, the figure of the landowner who can be a capitalist at the same time, but who is not the owner of the land he works, he is a landowner: it is the whole development of slavery and the confrontation in the Civil War regarding whether the states that were further west were going to have slaves or not. it's mixed with all that. Where the occupation of territory begins in the east and center of the United States, where the agricultural region par excellence is, there is a fragmentation of land ownership that is enormously great. The rural property units are... I have it written there in the book of land rent, but they are much smaller than in Argentina. And there is a relatively slow process of centralization of that property. But it's all that's called the *rednecks*, the "red collars," that are the base of the Republican Party and the most reactionary thing that there can be in the U.S.; they come from that history: it's the rural petty bourgeois who has all these things that Marx points out, like what happens in a society where property is based on one's own labor, it is strongly fragmented and cannot be cooperated; they are reactionary individuals, but very violently. Well, this, I already missed that Alejandro was answering you, but...

Alejandro: No, but for example in proposals, I understand, according to for example, I read Ferrer, who is quite well-known, who gives the example of farmers in the United States, and contrasts it with Argentina, it is proposed that we have to seek to do something similar to what the United States was with respect to farmers to decentralize the land and, in short, it is like you have that idealized vision, even with respect to what political action is here in Argentina.

JIC: Yes. There is something else in this process that does not enter into what we are looking at here, which is the appropriation of land rent, but what is happening in Argentina is that there is a process of very strong centralization of capital in this area in classic agricultural production, the production of grains: there is a very strong centralization of capital without there being centralization of territorial property; The fragmentation of landed property—in the part that is fragmented, because it is not all fragmented—is overcome by the centralization of agrarian capital. But the property continues... even in Argentina there is a process of increasing fragmentation of agrarian property in that area.

That is why the American WASP, of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, comes from that image, and... they are going to make me fall into the vulgarity of invoking "The Ingalls family",[338] which everyone knows what it is, at least in Argentina, also that it is another generation [Laughs], but that appears. And "The Ingalls family" has an expression of what Marx says about what happens when capital develops in the territories of the colonies, because at a certain point in the development of history, the Ingalls family has to move, because the land they are occupying is claimed by a landowner who has centralized the land, who have a general ownership of the land, and are displaced and driven westward. So one can take it as an example of the critique of modern colonization theory. That said, let's get to things with more content.

What I wanted to put to you are these questions. If one looks at this development that Marx makes, what one finds is that there is a leap in the deployment of the working class as the subject that overcomes the capitalist mode of production. Because the working class that appears in all the development that Marx has been doing up to this point, what it has is the workers turned into appendages of the machinery, who hardly have any educational process as a consequence of this, but the educational process that is described is an absolutely elementary educational process. There is a mass of surplus population that is increasingly miserable, and we saw that capital not only takes away the exercise of its ability to work, but directly takes away its ability to work, and that is described in the development that Marx is making. The organization of production up to this point is in the hands of the capitalists. Science appears, and Marx makes it clear that science is not the product of... Someone has to personify the development of science, science does not develop abstractly, and what he has been proposing is that the capitalists are not the personifiers of the development of science, but the workers are never mentioned as developers of science. The only reference to scientific knowledge on the part of the workers is when he speaks of the maintenance workers, saying that they have a mixture of scientific knowledge and manual, artisanal skill. How, then, is it that a working class, which has been described under all these conditions, suddenly appears, simply because it has the discipline of collective labor, and because science has developed, but which is not an attribute of the working class, how does it pass to an organization of social labor in which these free individuals have appeared, who are free because they recognize themselves in their condition as workers, who are free in their condition of individual organs of the process of social life?

And I expand on this. There is a whole series of different political approaches regarding who is the subject who can overcome this gap that is there. Lenin's proposal appears—I think it is from 1905 somewhere—that the allies of the working class are not the petty bourgeoisie, but the big capitalists, that the working class has to make use of the big capitalists, because those are the ones who know how to organize collective work. There have been proposals regarding: well, what happens is that in socialism all social relations are going to be clear, so one does not need much development to realize how things are; and this is the

[338] The series is known as "The House on the Prairie" in Spain.

most absolute vulgarity with respect to the necessity of scientific consciousness. Therefore, this development does not appear in Volume 1 of *Capital* .

I make a clarification. Then, in Volume 3, there are some references to the fact that the capitalist can delegate the management of capital to a wage-earner – he does not say that he is a member of the working class or anything, he is a wage-earner – that the workers in circulation have *some* training, that they know languages, that they have training in accounting... But there is no reference other than that. This for me contrasts very strongly with a development that Marx makes in a draft that is almost ten years prior to the writing of the first edition of Volume 1, which is what is known as the *Grundrisse*, the name they have given it, to make it complete, it is *Fundamental Elements for the Critique of Political Economy (draft)*, where he proposes the development of the capitalist mode of production, and among the things that show the very initial character of all the development that Marx is making, he confronts the question of the commodity not immediately as it later appears, but begins by discussing the laws of banks that a follower or someone of Proudhon's line has proposed. which proposes to replace money with titles or vouchers for working time. It is from that, from beginning to criticize that, that in development the determinations of the value of commodities emerge, but it sprouts especially (and this happened to me that I was telling you before, when I was going to read something that I thought was going to answer the question I had... I read this anyway because of the obligation of the course of the faculty, where it reaches the point of the commodity as a social relation). Well, I mean, he starts with this, and when he finishes that draft, he has a note that says... It's not exactly going back to the beginning, it's debatable, but it's the commodity and the deployment of the commodity (it's 1-2 pages with which that draft closes).

Well, in that draft it is advancing, questions of fixed capital and circulating capital appear, the "labor force" does not appear, it still appears as "labor"... But it advances, and arrives at the formation of the general rate of profit, and in this development it looks at what happens to the organic composition of capital (which we saw in Volume 1 unfolded). And he goes on to propose how the development of the production of relative surplus value is transforming the materiality of labor — it is not clear whether it belongs to the workers or not because of something that I am going to propose now — which is transforming manual labor into intellectual labor. And there is the famous expression of the development of the *general intellect*, which is the general intellect. That, I put one thing, because when we get to Volume 3, it will already be far behind, but at a certain point, talking about other issues, this observation will appear. He is going to say: collective work must be distinguished from general work; and he is going to define the general work by saying (the draft was also written before the publication of Volume 1): the general work is every discovery, every invention, it is the scientific work. And then it will make some more development.

When one looks at the "general work," in something that may be evoking references to the complexity of Hegel's development, rather than the term "general"—and Marx sometimes uses the term in the sense of "universal," something that everyone has—but the term general associates, links with "generic." And so, one can ask oneself what we already looked at in Volume 1,

when we look at the development of machinery, which is changing the materiality of work because it is necessary to develop the capacity to control natural forces, to scientifically organize the production process, the social character of labor within the condition of private labor. And we saw that this transformation in the, I think it has been 156 years since the publication of the first volume of *Capital*, that development, the subject of the development of scientific knowledge, is the working class, but it is not present.

I go back one thing and do another thing... What is it that Marx is proposing there (which is also what is in the chapter on the increase of the organic composition of capital)? This is what leads to the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production: more and more there is a smaller portion of living labor that sets in motion an enormously large social power that is materialized in dead labor, it is in constant capital; There is more and more machinery, more and more the function of living labor is to organize the automatic movement of the process of social production. That's where the *general intellect comes in*.

I add this: when we, very early on, looked at the historical development of human labor, we said: at the beginning it is distinguished from animal productive activity only by the degree to which it is capable of transforming the environment; and the development of this degree leads to greater and greater complexity, etc., and animal knowledge, which is transformed into human knowledge in this whole process, is no longer enough to govern the process of social production and consumption: we need knowledge that knows itself knowledge, conscious knowledge is needed. And when we looked at that, we said: from that point on, human labor differs from all animal productive activity, not simply by the scale with which it transforms the environment into a means for itself, but by the way in which it governs that transformation. And then, it is no longer an animal species, it is not distinguished as a species from animals by a simple quantitative question: it is distinguished by the way it organizes its life process.

Up to this point, human labor differs from the work of animal productive activity because of the way in which it is organized, because it is organized as a conscious and voluntary activity, but materially, manual labor continues to have the same form as animal productive activity. The way in which it is organized has changed, but its execution remains: the tool is in the hands of the producer and the producer applies that tool to the object of work and transforms it. But when machinery appears, Marx states that now the worker is standing on the side of the flow of production, and what is left for human labor, and the more the automation of machinery develops, is the organization of that process, the development of dominion over nature in order to make that nature execute the immediate labor process. And if one looks at Marx's reference to scientific labor as general, generic human labor, human labor now differs from any form of animal productive activity not only by the way it is organized, but by the way it is executed: the human subject does not intervene in the execution. And when we saw the development of machinery (and this is in the *Grundrisse*), what we found was the expulsion of the workers from the production process and the generation of the mass of the surplus working population.

So, there it appears, or one can recognize a historical development of the capitalist mode of production that is absent in *Capital*, sorry, it is absent from the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. On the contrary: the whole development of these conditions that appears to be linked to the movement of the capitalist mode of production is what opens the door to the chapter of primitive accumulation, because it is: up to this point the reproduction of capital does not tell us anything more, because it is reproduced indefinitely, capital begets surplus value, surplus value begets capital, and this is a movement that seems to have no end. To see if it has an end we have to go to the starting point where this was not the case. On the other hand, when you look at the development that is in the *Grundrisse*... It is not fully developed, but what you can see is that progress is being made in the direction of: it is the transformation of the materiality of work, of this whole process that is taking place of increasing socialization of private labor, which also came from the development of machinery, of the automation of machinery, of human labor, it is the exercise of scientific thought, therefore, objective of the human being... Well, this is the form, the course that the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production follows.

But when he arrives at this development, Marx makes this observation. He says: with this multiplication of social wealth, the working population grows, but the population in general also has to grow because scientific development has to be carried out; with which, it seems again that the working population is not the bearer of scientific development. But it does appear that the transformation of the materiality of work is at stake here. Well, I don't know if the synthesis was more or less clear.

I make a marginal clarification: then there are fantasies that when Marx speaks of the *general intellect* (because the draft puts it in English, then it has remained for everyone as "general intellect"), in reality the *general intellect* is, among other things, the work of advertising, and the approximation of production to the consumer via, among other things, advertising, the manipulation of consumer consumption. Now: that is not what Marx calls "general intellect." *General intellect* is scientific work, objective knowledge, not the emotional part of the production process, the good relations of the personnel office with the workers. Those have scientific knowledge, but that is not the development of the *general intellect* as such, at least from my point of view. There, in the new version of *Knowing Capital Today. Critically Using* Capital I added a chapter discussing this with respect to the *general intellect*.

Well, first, if you want to raise something about this that I have just deployed. Is there nothing to question, to ask? So I continue with one thing...

Edgardo: Juan, one thing. I don't know how important it is, but why do you think Marx didn't see the working class as the subject of science?

JIC: Well, that's what I was going to go for, so this is the intervention that corresponded to what followed. Again, why does Marx, having this development, not make an axis in it to propose the historical character of the capitalist mode of production? It is something that only Marx could have answered. All one can say,

looking at the determinations that one can recognize in that development, is what could have played a role in this. But many of these determinations are still not absolute in the face of the contrast between the two approaches.

One of the axes is that it does not propose... He always says "Capital appropriates the science of others", but who is the "alien" if not the workers? One can speculate that the historical moment in which Marx is doing the development and, moreover, seeing that Marx sometimes makes references to historical forms that may be contemporary, but that they may also be somewhat earlier, and that he presents them more immediately and that if one looks at who they were, Marx, Engels, Lassalle even more (he came from the nobility), but neither Marx nor Engels *came* from the working class: they were a product, they had education as a product of the petty bourgeoisie. Engels was the son of a textile capitalist, perhaps something bigger. Marx was the son of a lawyer, mixed with a civil servant. Marx's wife came from what appears to be the "lower nobility", but that could also be some title granted without territorial property, but simply because she had the "Von" in her surname. I do not know where Proudhon came from. But I suppose that many of these, it was very difficult for a classical worker, even in the large industry of his time, to have attended university.

This is what I mentioned before we started: by 1820, the English population had an average of two years of schooling. And I think that a large part of that schooling, first of all, had to be strongly asymmetrical in how it was distributed within the population, but also in the case of factory workers, that it was possibly an education given within the factory itself. And so, it may be that it was very difficult to recognize that this work that required not to come from the working class, and it was dominant that scientists did not come from the working class or did not see themselves as working class. Adam Smith was a hireling; Richard was not a wage-earner, he has been a capitalist successful in speculation, and after speculation he retired and devoted himself to political action in the name of the English bourgeoisie. When one sees other characters that are quite earlier, but they were characters of scientific development, as is the case of Leibniz... Hegel was a salesman of labour-power, he had tutored a young man of the aristocracy until he got him appointed to a university, but I suppose they did not see themselves as members of the working class. And if one projects it, then what appears from this in historical development?

Lenin's proposal appears that the working class can only develop a trade-unionist consciousness, so the most enlightened elements, basically of the petty bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie, have to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class. And this is written 30 or 40 years after Marx's development. And today — I always put it in these terms — many political party militants who see themselves as representing the interests of the working class, do not consider themselves members of the working class. There has been a historical stage within Trotskyism where what appeared was that since individuals who are not from the working class are coming into the party, you have to proletarianize and go to the factory, because that's where the working class is, you have to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class in the factory. And in something that causes irritation in the courses, in Argentina, the left front is called the "Left and Workers'

Front", as if the left were not the workers; so even today, individuals who do intellectual work do not recognize themselves as members of the working class.

So, whether he played this or not, only Marx could have answered. Other reasons, one says, to encourage the revolutionary movement, and then they raise this, that the time has already struck, and this is a much easier process, that this is expropriating the expropriators, etc., is also somewhat strange, because with all the previous development, to go and synthesize the end of the work like this... That in the *Grundrisse*, the development of machinery is linked to the movement of the rate of profit, that in Volume 1 the rate of profit does not appear and then he considered that he forced the development if he put this forward because he was seeing it as linked to the movement of the rate of profit, and because I was seeing it as it is... But it is placed in Volume 1 when it speaks of the organic composition of capital, there is that there is less and less living labor compared to dead labor, which is what it is. So I don't have an answer. The first answer sounds reasonable to me, but I can't explain it more clearly than to say that.

It may have come from [...] who looked at themselves and had the scientific consciousness, they had the revolutionary consciousness, and it is clear that they were not members of the working class. Moreover, Marx confesses his failure with the attempt to sell his labor power because of the bad handwriting, that he had presented himself to work I don't know where and because of the bad handwriting they had not accepted him. And when he works as a journalist, he works as a journalist who also appears as what a commodity seller would be.

Alejandro: In a railway company, or a shipping company?

JIC: I don't remember exactly what the place where he had performed was. I don't know if it was some administration, I don't know if it was customs or something like that, but I really don't remember.

Edgardo: I think it was a train station, right?

JIC: What Alejandro raises is whether it was a railway company, it may be that it was a train station.

Well, there are a number of things of a circumstantial nature in Marx's life that show him how he looked at himself. But at the same time, when one says: but he wrote this, and he was able to see the unity of all this, why did he have that clarity, that ability to be able to see ahead, why didn't he turn it over (also having what he wrote having something sketched out on this question)? And considering that he makes a 2nd edition in which he changes chapter I a lot, [...] he does not make a substantial change to include what he had developed. It has some revisions in the part of concentration and centralization, so you get to see it at the point where it had already developed everything about the organic composition of capital, but hey.

My proposal that we have an advantage over Marx to see this, are two questions. One is that we have the work done by Marx, and then we have a process of

recognition from the social point of view, not of having to produce original knowledge from the social point of view. And the second thing is that if we look at ourselves, we are all sellers of labor power, and we see science developed, and science is developed by sellers of labor power. So, despite the fact that these sellers of labor power do not recognize themselves as members of the working class, the possibility of recognizing themselves in that condition and of recognizing themselves as bearers of scientific knowledge is immediate.

So, my proposal for the next one is: let's look again now at all the development that we were doing in Volume 1 pointing in this direction. Now that we have all the unfolding, we have the historical character of the capitalist mode of production, let's see what the capitalist mode of production does in the process of historical development and what contradictions this process is revealing. In Marx the contradiction of the social character of labor and the private appropriation of the product of labor appears; I want to propose to you in this deployment another aspect of that contradiction. Let's look at that, and I don't want to forget – and I run the risk of forgetting – to look again at Marx's development and see how the unity of the process of development of knowledge that Marx unfolds appears. How this is enunciated at a very early moment, but only enunciated, and how all this development is the unfolding of what was enunciated. Let me know if I don't get to refer to it. And then, let's hope that we have time to do something like an evaluation of what we have done so far on your part (I doubt, but hey). Today we didn't stay until 9:36 p.m. in Argentina. See you next Wednesday.

[Discussion and synthesis of the content of Marx's development: historical reason, revolutionary subject and consciousness] [i]

JIC: Any questions you would like to raise regarding what we advanced last time?

Javiera: What did they end up with? I just watched half of the video from last class.

JIC: We had finished accompanying Marx's development, not the past, but the previous one. Last week we were looking at the insinuation of contrast with the approach that appears in the *Grundrisse* and that was the axis, I think, I don't know if there was anything else. Because there also appeared the transformation in the materiality of work, but at the same time the development of scientific knowledge did not appear as an immediate attribute of the working class, but of the "population"; but well, that was the axis.

Javiera: And chapter XXV?

JIC: And chapter XXV very quickly, because of its historical significance at the time that Marx develops capital and the contrast with today, where they appear... In reality, we could have stopped at proposals such as "market socialism", which has nothing to do with the modern theory of colonization, but which are... Nor does it have the same character as the theory of colonization, because it was the illusion that, just as the mere production of commodities begets the capitalist mode of production, so now the capitalist mode of production begets the simple production of commodities. And in reality, market socialism no longer has the character of simple private and independent producers, rather it has the character of simple production of commodities but in collective labor processes. But well, I don't know if they want to talk about that. I would go to the proposal to develop how I see the historical character of the capitalist mode of production and its supersession. And how one can recognize this in all the development that Marx does, plus a part of the development that goes beyond what Marx does, but that is born from that deployment.

If we start with that, then, there are like two moments in that development. Sometimes I focus on one, in particular, sometimes I take both; I will risk taking both in this sense. When one looks at the productive forces of human labor—what we saw at the beginning—those productive forces have an individual character and they have a social character. They are the product of social labor, they are individually carried out in the subjectivity of the individual who works, but at the same time, the social character of labor is manifested in the form of work that is carried out in a social way due to its collective character. So, for me, when one looks at the historical development of the human race, one can recognize in the different modes of production that are unfolding, not necessarily in historical order, because in some places they have different forms and the sequence does not pretend to be a strictly historical sequence, but because of what they show with respect to the development of the productive forces of the individual who works, that is, of individual work and social labor as work that is not done by an isolated

individual, but by a collective worker. They arise from the immediate collective character of work, and from the organization of work.

So, if one looks at and starts with the primitive community, the productive forces of the individual and those of his condition as an individual organ of the community, one can say that they march together. These productive forces are so limited that the individual in his labor process cannot be separated from the collective unit of which he is formed—the community—and this is the longest phase in the history of the human being. The unity between the individual and social character of labor and consumption is realized in the form of the bonds of personal dependence proper to the community. And there is a very long process, because one can consider that this lasts between 2 and 3 million years, where the productive forces of individual labor are transformed, and at the same time, of social labor, as a particular collective process, and the power that society has in its unity to advance in that development.

There is a whole series of transformations, there are transformations in the capacity of the human being to operate on the environment, there are substantial transformations in the human organism itself, and one can find a point—which is going to be relevant to what we want to look at—of a transformation in the concrete forms of work, and consequently in the development of the productive forces. which is, more or less 15,000 years ago, the development of agriculture, which implies, instead of hunting and gathering, controlling the biological cycle of plants, which in turn allows the biological cycle of animals to be controlled, and that has as an expression a very strong expansion of the human population based on these capacities. And in addition, it is the moment that corresponds to the occupation by human beings of the entire earth's surface where life can be produced on the basis of... In some cases it is simply still hunting and gathering, but what will characterize the process is the development of agriculture. And this expansion of the human population extends the human population over territories in which agriculture can only be done under irrigation and under large-scale irrigation.

The primitive community already has substantial transformations that are unfolding, but here, in order to be able to put those lands into production with agricultural production, now it is necessary to develop a capacity to control the natural process of this flow of water that requires the development of a capacity that is carried in certain individuals of society that exceeds any degree of development of that previous capacity. And so, what is going to emerge is a new way of organizing production, and consequently, of organizing consumption, which is the emergence of what is known as the great empires of Antiquity. Where there is an enormous development of the productive forces of labour on the basis of a division of labour which implies a mutilation of individual productive forces, because the direct process of production remains in the hands of the mass of the peasant population which no longer has the attribute of governing the general organisation of the process of social life – its consciousness and its will can only govern this immediate process of individual labour – and another part of society that no longer participates in the immediate process of work, but is in charge of the general organization of that process.

And this, in the society of estates, of castes, has the form of the caste of the peasants, who are the ones who are going to put their labor power into operation with enormous power due to the collective character of their work; the caste or class of priests, who are in charge of the organization, the development of the capacity to govern irrigation, to set in motion that mass of collective labor force in a coordinated manner, etc.; and the emergence of the military establishment, which exerts coercion on the mutilation of productive attributes – in particular of the peasant class – through the direct exercise of violence; all this based on relationships of personal dependence. And that when one looks at those empires, one has an enormous development of the productive forces of work done collectively, of social labor, at the expense of the mutilation of the individual productive forces, where the peasant individual no longer has the capacity to organize his own labor process, but participates, is an individual organ of the implementation of a collective labor force that has a power, a highly developed productive force. And one of the manifestations of this productive force of work done collectively is that one of the things that will characterize these empires are the great monumental constructions that strongly reflect the structure of the organization of social labor.

So, we have this mode of production where the productive forces of collective labor are sustained in the development of those productive forces, and the power of those productive forces is sustained in the mutilation of the productive forces of each individual. That when one looks at what happens with production processes based on irrigation, but that irrigation is no longer carried out on a large scale because they are limited valleys, what is going to appear is that, if in the empires of antiquity the organization of work is typical of a class that, It has an extensive character and is distributed within that class, in these places the organization of work, the control of irrigation and so on, has a much more strongly individual character, and at the same time direct work is done by slaves. And this is what appears as the classical forms of the slave mode of production in Greece and Rome, where such extensive masses of collective labor are no longer put into operation, but at the same time it is becoming an attribute of the members of a part of society to be bearers of the fullest capacity as an individual power in the organization of social labor. And in fact, the development of this mode of production ends up defeating the empires of antiquity, but it is based on the mutilation of the productive attributes of the direct producers – they cannot participate in the organization of their own social labor nor can they put those same masses into operation, the scale of functioning of collective labor is smaller.

[…] And here one has to look at the particular case of Europe, because it is where the transformation is going to take place, where it is going to appear as a characteristic with greater potentiality, and this modality is spreading until the centralization of the organization of social labor can no longer be sustained. Compared to the scale it is taking, it exceeds the potential of this centralized organization; and what is going to appear, particularly in places where agriculture is not done under irrigation, there is rainfed agriculture, or they are areas of very little irrigation, what is going to appear is a new mode of production of which I referred to what Marx develops in Volume 3, which is the feudal mode of

production, with the transition from tribute in labor, to tribute in kind, to tribute in money. Where there is, compared in particular to the empires of antiquity, but even compared to classical slavery, there is no longer the capacity to set in motion mass collective work: now the organization of that collective work is much more limited. But the direct producer begins to recover the ability to organize, first, his simply individual work with the tribute in work.

What I was saying about the problem of the serf, how he organizes his work in the time that he has to produce his labor power in order to be in a position to work on the lord's land. When we look at the tax in kind, what appears is that now all the direct organization of work, except for the definition of what is going to be produced and how much it is going to have to produce, has been managed by the direct producer. And when we look at the tribute in money, what we find is that, now, even the definition of what is going to be produced, is an attribute of the direct producer. And so, when one looks at the feudal mode of production in contrast to the classical slave mode of production, what one will find is that there is a process of recovery by the direct producer of the ability to organize his social labor at the expense of the productive forces that are proper to collective labor. of social labor as collective work.

Again, the contrast that one can find there are several aspects: you can no longer do the great works typical of the empires of Antiquity, you can no longer make the road system that the Roman Empire does, you lose the powers of that collective work. And the other aspect that will characterize this transformation in how work is organized is that the development of what appears as scientific knowledge no longer plays a central role, although both in Greece and in classical Rome it is mixed with the production of religious consciousness, but at the same time it is appearing as the development of scientific knowledge; the fragmentation of the production process into units that set in motion individual work or limited collective work, will manifest itself in the fact that this scientific knowledge is no longer needed, and what will characterize feudal society is that, at most, what is done with existing scientific knowledge is to preserve it – when it is not directly lost – because it does not play a role in that movement; and instead, cohesion in the form of religious consciousness becomes central to the bond of personal dependence.

When one looks at Marx's development in the chapter on primitive accumulation and gets to the point where he says what the capitalist mode of production does, before asking himself this he says: if one looks at what happens to the slave, what happens to the serf, it seems that what has changed is the way in which the direct producer, the worker is a forced laborer. He was a forced laborer because of his personal dependence, now he is a forced laborer because he is a doubly free individual. And that is where for me he poses the axis of the question, when he says what primitive accumulation tends towards. When it tends beyond this, what it tends to is what it does with the individual who was already free in feudal society: the free peasant and the free artisan. I made the caveat, these individuals are full of bonds of personal dependence, because in the production of simple commodities the regulation of the unity between social productions and consumption needs to be governed directly, not simply through the exchange of

commodities. But in any case, if one takes it, what appears is the same subject that existed when we started with the first chapter of Volume 1: the simple producer of commodities, who has full control over his individual labor, has no control over the social character of his labor insofar as he does not know whether what he is doing is socially useful or not. but in addition he cannot work collectively, not having any control over the social of his work also includes that he cannot perform directly social labor in the sense of collective work. And so it is the full expression of the individual productive forces, and at the same time the full mutilation of the collective productive forces. And what is Marx going to deploy and what is the basis of this? It is private ownership over one's own means of production. Otherwise, you cannot have full control over individual work.

And then, what is the content in that development, so to speak, of Volume 1? Last time we also talked about whether Marx presents it as historical development or simply as the development of what is in front of him from this simpler form of the social relation in the capitalist mode of production that is the commodity. But it doesn't matter if you look at it... And what we were talking about is that Marx appears looking at it as a historical process, even though he does not discover any determination, except what appears in chapter II, proper to the capitalist mode of production. And in Chapter II what appears is that this, in the capitalist mode of production, was already resolved by the origin of the commodity, not as the product of socially necessary abstract labor done privately and independently, but as the product of a circumstantial change. What will appear in the unfolding of Volume 1 is the process of socialization of private labor.

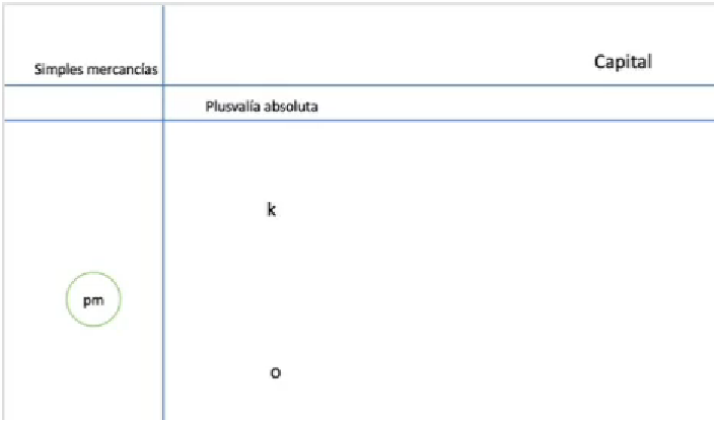
And the process of socialization of private labor (I say this to begin with and then we will see under what concrete forms) is the process of converting the productive forces of individual free labor into productive forces of collective free labor. The condition for this transformation, which is what Marx marks there in the chapter on primitive accumulation, is the dissolution of private property over the means of production itself, the transformation of the commodity producer, who was the absolute expression of social labor done privately, the separation of his means of production in such a way as to make him a doubly free individual. who brings the productive attributes of the free individual, but who can no longer fully work as a free individual. So, I am going to accompany it with a graph that I used throughout the deployment of Volume 1 [...].



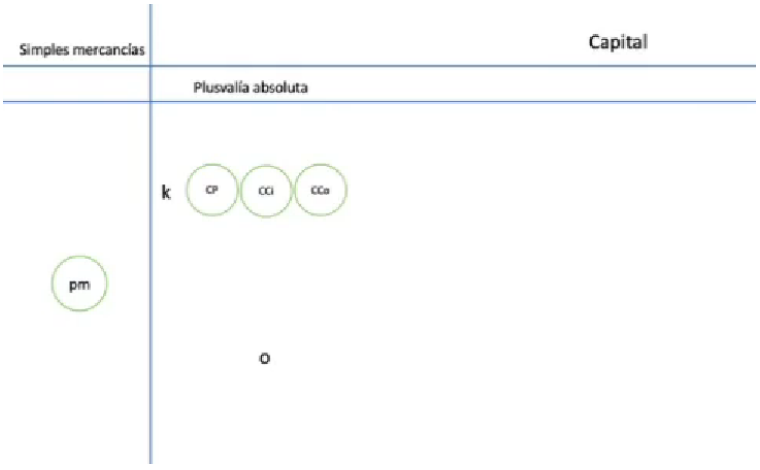
Well, what we are starting from here is the subject of Chapter I to Chapter III, it is the producer of commodities: full control over individual labor, no control over

the social character of labor, impossibility of cooperation based on private ownership of one's own means of production.

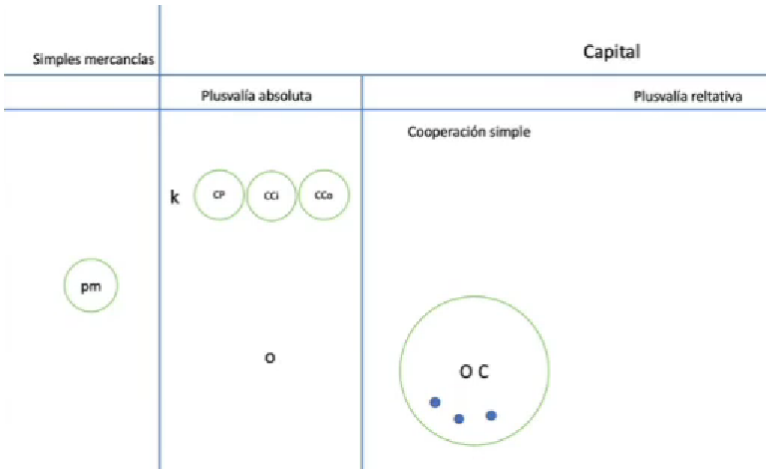
When we pass from the first section to the second, to that of absolute surplus value, and then begin to look at capital, what we find is the fragmentation of the attributes of the commodity producer between the worker and the capitalist:



Marx takes the worker in this outburst with the attributes that come as a producer of commodities who has been converted into a doubly free individual. They are two free individuals who, within the production unit, one has the function of organizing the production process, the other has the function of immediately executing the production process. The direct producer no longer has full control over his individual labor, but at the same time retains the proper control of a free individual over the execution of that labor. The capitalist has control, let's call it, "general" of the worker's work, he organizes the work, but he no longer has the power to perform that work. And so, what one has in front of you in this is that a process of social labor arose within the private unit of production where there is an individual who organizes it and there is an individual who executes it, but who do not have a direct personal link, but are two free individuals who set in motion the productive forces of that free labor. There is a first step in socialization within private labor and at the same time there is a mutilation of the individual productive forces, because the worker no longer directs production and the capitalist no longer knows how to do production.

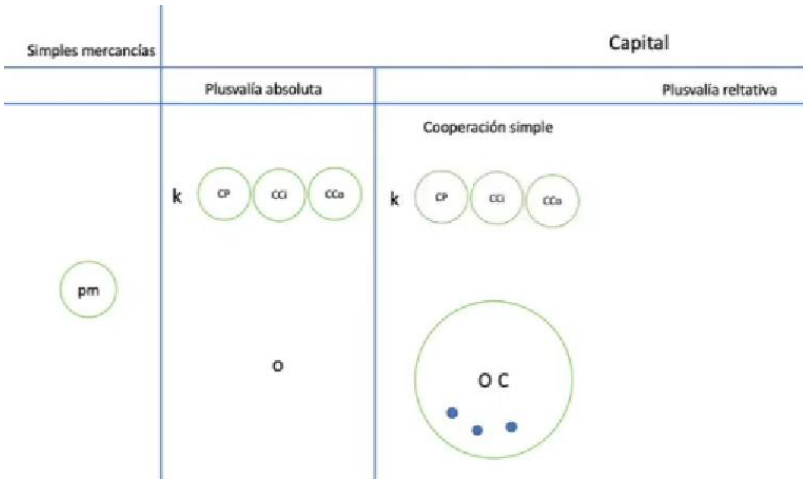


Well, we look at the capitalist in the functions of productive consciousness, consciousness or personification of capital in the circulation and exercise of coercion. But I'm leaving this aside, we just had these attributes.

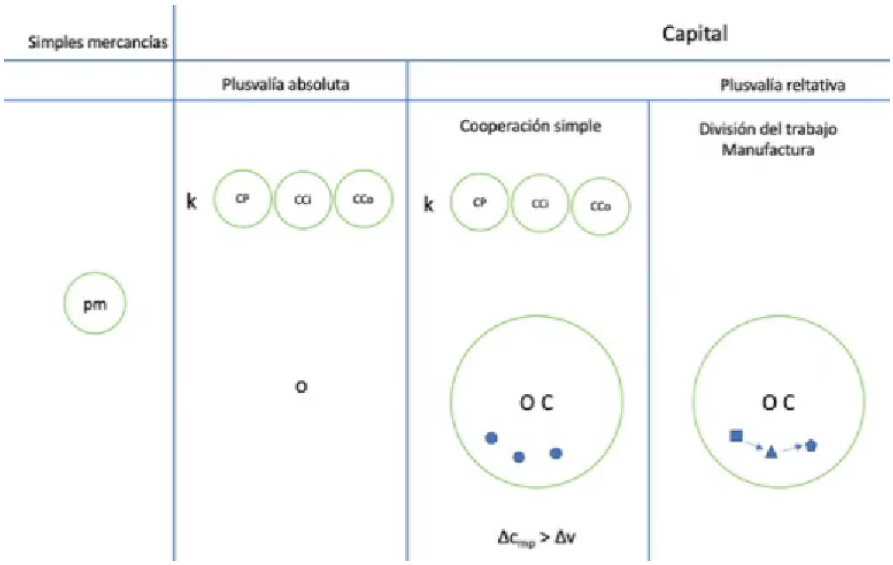


When we moved on to the next section, which is that of relative surplus value, up to this point we looked at the worker, classes appeared, but within the production process there did not appear, as a specific question, a socialization of the worker's labor. [...] What do we look at? Simple cooperation, where now within the production process there began to be a collective worker. Marx still does not give it the name "collective worker" because each one is still doing a simply individual work in simple cooperation, they all do the same, but each of them produces an integral commodity; And yet here labor forces sprang from the social character of labor: emulation appeared, learning appeared, and the productive forces of these individuals, of these individual workers, multiplied on the basis of the social character that their labor was acquiring, although each one continued to produce an integral commodity.

But when Marx unfolds the process of cooperation, the last form of cooperation that appears is no longer that each one produces a commodity independent of that of the others, but that they all do the same thing, but they all work on the same unitary commodity. And now, that labor process, even though each one does the same as the others, that commodity, springs up as a product of collective work. And it is another step, then—there are two steps in there—in the socialization within the private character of work. Therefore, it is a socialization of private labor. Private labor is a way of organizing social labor.



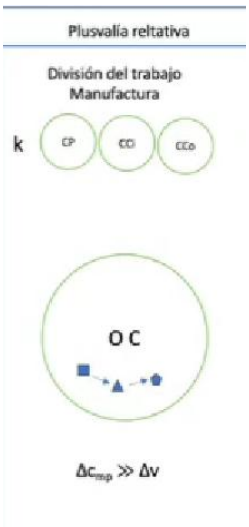
Well, we had the functions of the capitalist, the contradictory form that this takes, of the growth of constant capital put into raw materials at the expense of variable capital, and we reached the limit of the productive force that this way of socializing labor has.



And we passed to the division of labor in manufacturing, where now the commodity was the product directly of a collective worker of whom each worker did a partial task. What did we find in this then? The productive force of this collective work, as each one was specialized in a partial task, was enhanced; but at the same time, the productive forces of each worker were more mutilated. The individual worker could not even know in the production of what commodity he was participating in because his partial task did not allow him to know the unity of the production process in which he participated. Then, the development of this contradiction appears within the capitalist mode of production. The productive forces of the collective social character of labor are being developed, and at the same time the individual productive forces are being mutilated.

When we looked at the role of the capitalist, [...] what we said is: now we have to make a production plan, we have to design the collective worker; therefore, the

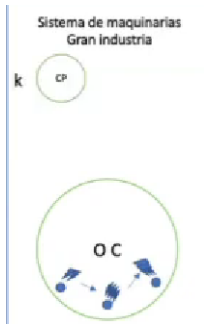
work of organizing the process of social production carried out privately becomes increasingly complex. And at the same time, [...] what began to appear is that within the collective worker there appeared functions of work organization, but immediately linked to the development of that labor process; because the figure of the foreman appeared, the specialized worker who had auxiliary workers who assisted him in production.



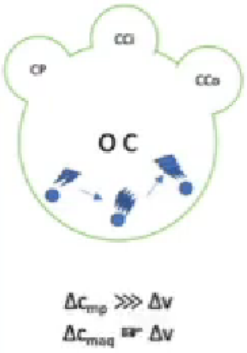
We looked at the development of the socialization of private labor within the division of labor in manufacturing, and its limitation appeared, which arises from the materiality of the worker's labor: that the tool was in the hands of the worker. As we had before us, the overcoming in this process of socialization of private labor was the development of the machinery system.



In this development of the machinery system, production now necessarily had a collective character, because it is a system of specialized machines, and what we found was that the workers had their productive attributes even more mutilated because they became appendages of the machinery. And what Marx is proposing is: the spiritual mastery of the labor process is now objectified in the machine, and the machine belongs to the capitalists, and is therefore alien to the workers. But we made a development that goes beyond that when we considered that now what governed the production process is scientific knowledge.



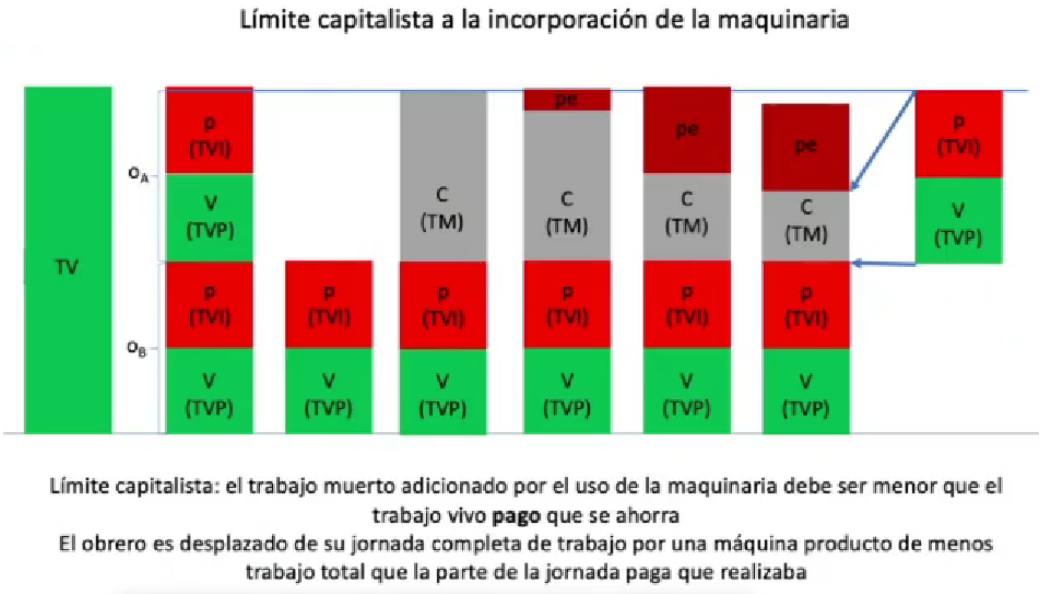
And we went beyond Marx's development, because Marx says that capitalists do not fulfill that role, but he does not say who fulfills it, and we asked ourselves who could fulfill it and we found the need for capital satisfied by that scientific consciousness through the function of the organization of production coming to be integrated into the body of the collective worker. and it became an attribute of the collective worker. We looked at the circulation and we had the same thing, and we looked at the coercion and we had the same thing.



And if one looks at this process up to this point and looks at the development of the capitalist mode of production, then, well, here was the contradiction, what began to appear at this point is that, just as it mutilates the productive subjectivity of the workers that it turns into appendages of machinery, it develops the productive subjectivity of the workers that it requires for them to personify the function of capital. And then this movement appeared.

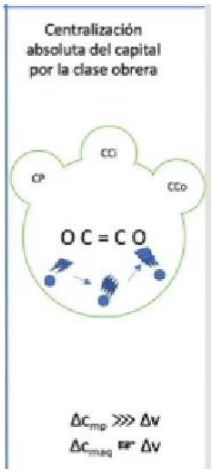
If we looked at it up to here, which was as far as the development of the production of relative surplus value goes, in the first instance, what we have is the development of the socialization of private labor that, in its movement, transforms the materiality of labor, transforms what was manual labor into intellectual labor, takes the tool out of the hands of the worker and converts it into this automatic mechanism where natural forces are controlled and that control is objectified, the social character of labor within private labor is controlled, and the subject bearing this development is the working class whose body... What we had was: this development turns the capitalist class into a parasite from the point of view of capital and takes away its historical right to exist, and within the collective worker what we had was the antagonistic relationship between buyer and seller of labor power, because a substantial part of that collective worker fulfills both: it is a seller of labor power whose function is to act as the personification of capital.

So, we had this movement. When we continued to look at the process of reproduction, at the process of production of relative surplus value, we saw the situation in which we saw the transformation, not only of the materiality of the labor of the working class, but the growing transformation of the working class into relative overpopulation for the needs of capital.


Límite capitalista a la incorporación de la maquinaria
TV
o_A
o_B
p (TVI)
V (TVP)
C (TM)
pe
Límite capitalista: el trabajo muerto adicionado por el uso de la maquinaria debe ser menor que el trabajo vivo **pago** que se ahorra
El obrero es desplazado de su jornada completa de trabajo por una máquina producto de menos trabajo total que la parte de la jornada paga que realizaba

And here, what we had in front of us is that capital develops the productive forces of that free labor as social labor within its private form, at the expense, not only of mutilating the individual productive forces, but of directly wresting those individual productive forces from the workers that it consolidates in the condition of surplus.

And we went a step beyond what is in *Capital*, where Marx arrives at a single capital, but with the capitalist who continues to fulfill the functions of the management of capital, we arrive at an absolute centralization of capital as the property of the working class, it is the full socialization of private labor within that private labor.



We had a single organ of social production which nevertheless has no control over the unity between social production and consumption. Social labor is set in motion with the immediate purpose of multiplying the capacity to set social labor in motion as something that conscience cannot control; Because consciousness is determined as the personification of capital, its determination is that what it has to do is to set capital in motion again. So, we have the full development of the alienation of labor in capital, because the contradiction is no longer the social character of labor and the private character of appropriation, but now it is the contradiction that has been brought to full development, it is the socialization of private labor: there is only one unit of production, All labor is organized in this unit, and yet the immediate purpose for which social labor is set in motion is not the production of use-values, but to multiply this implementation. Which, at the same time, implies that there is no immediate unity between production and social consumption.

And then, if one looks at Marx's deployment in *Capital* and moves beyond that deployment... Because in Marx's deployment, what he was saying the other time was that up to now the working class has been seen losing all productive attributes; it is clear, from what he states in the *Grundrisse*, that the key lies in the transformation of the materiality of work into the development of intellectual work, the differentiation of human work from any animal productive activity not only by the way in which it is governed, but by the very materiality of that work. Well, in development I contrasted these transformations with, on the one hand, the development that appears in the text of *Capital* with respect to what happens to the workers in the capitalist mode of production, and suddenly, the leap to which, simply because of the development of their fighting spirit in the face of the general law of capitalist accumulation, and from its organization and discipline by the collective character of work, they went on to transform their freedom, from being doubly free, having no control over the social character of labor, into a freedom in which each individual immediately recognizes himself as an individual organ of the process of social life.

So, in the first place, one looks at the development of Volume 1 in particular, and what is before you is this: what does the capitalist mode of production do as a historical mode of development of the productive forces of social labor. But not only what he does, but how he does it. That up to that point the historical character of the capitalist mode of production had not been developed anywhere; Marx is the one who makes the original development from the point of view not only individually, but from the social point of view, of this unfolding, with the parts that we are looking at beyond the development that Marx makes. But not even Marx himself, until he finished elaborating Volume 1, had been able to unfold it. I will then refer to the fact that this is what Marx sees from the beginning, and it takes him his whole life to be able to unfold what he saw from the beginning; which has a further step, that is: in what he already proposes, the society of fully free individuals. Well, then first of all what you have is this deployment.

This deployment shows that just as the capitalist mode of production has all these powers that we were seeing for the development of the productive forces of individual free labor as productive forces of collective free labor, what it is

deploying is all the mutilations that it performs of those same productive forces. And what is the historical form of the development of the productive forces like, which is just as it is the absolute most powerful for that development and sweeps away all the others (and well, I take it up to that point so as not to add things that come later in Marx's development), and at the same time shows that it is the mode of production that most brutally annihilates productive forces.

Now, with this approach, in my opinion, what is missing is that leap that Marx is going to make in the chapter on primitive accumulation and that which is interrupted in the development of the *Grundrisse*. Because the problem is not just to say: well, this has the mutilation of productive forces, and consequently it cannot be the full form of the development of human life, of the generic human being, because what we look at when we start is that every living species, in this case the human race, needs to advance in the capacity to transform the environment into a means for itself, and this is not the full way of developing that capacity because of all the mutilations it shows. But the question one has is in what concrete form it is that the capitalist mode of production brings with it the development, now absolute, the overcoming of the contradiction that is essential to it, which is this contradiction of the growing socialization of private labor. The overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, which is the direct socialization of free labor, can only spring from the development of this contradiction, from bringing this contradiction to its absolute negation.

And the development of this contradiction has to be sought in the same thing that has shown him what the capitalist mode of production has been doing. And what the capitalist mode of production has been doing shows is the transformation of the materiality of labor. If one looks at this transformation, what one has is that the material product of the collective worker's labor tends to be more and more the production of scientific, objective knowledge, of how to control natural forces and how to organize labor socially, as an immediately social unit. And at the same time, when one looks at the social form that the product of labor has in the capitalist mode of production, and it is surplus value. And what is surplus value, and the transformation of surplus value into capital? It is the ability to multiply, to set social labor in motion as something that cannot be controlled. And so this contradiction takes this form (I will repeat it) of: materially work is the development of the capacity to control natural forces and to control the social character of labor – and this means: the unity between production and social consumption; and the social form is the negation of that materiality and that unity, it reproduces the implementation of social labor with the immediate purpose of producing more capacity to set social labor in motion with all the mutilations that the capitalist mode of production entails.

And so we have to seek, so to speak, the "point of overcoming" of the capitalist mode of production in this very transformation. And then, if one looks at it from the point of view of what makes the unity between production and social consumption, the start-up of that production that has no immediate unity with social consumption, points to the increase of the rate of surplus value. Because what did we have as the axis of the development of the productive forces of labor in the capitalist mode of production? The development of the production of

relative surplus value. The increase in the rate of surplus value has among its conditions that no use value is produced that is not socially useful, because every expenditure of labor power applied to producing a use value that is socially useless is a lost labor power for capital, it is surplus value that capital cannot realize (I forgot one thing before). And therefore, capital itself needs to advance in establishing the unity between social production and consumption in order to increase the rate of surplus value, and at the same time, if the unity between social production and consumption is established a priori, the automatic implementation of social labor to produce more surplus value is over. Because now there is an immediate unity between production and consumption, and the implementation of social labor has as its immediate purpose the satisfaction of social consumption. And this then is, when one looks at it, not as the whole process of development, but simply as the point at which the very movement of the capitalist mode of production surpasses itself.

I put it sometimes with this is an absolute vulgarity: capital goes out in the morning to increase the rate of surplus value by not wasting social labor because it does not immediately correspond to social consumption, it makes that production adjust to social consumption: capital ceased to be capital, now the immediate purpose of social production is to satisfy the needs of social consumption. This has as a condition, or as a way of realization, that each individual immediately recognizes himself in his condition as a concrete individual organ of the process of social metabolism. That is, it has been directly assigned which means of production it will have to use in its participation in the production process and which means of consumption it will have to use in the individual consumption process. Consequently, objective consciousness becomes the form of the social relation in general.

If you remember when we started, at the beginning of Volume 1, what we had proposed was that every human society faces each cycle of the process of reproduction of its life with the need to establish the unity between the individual character of work, the social character of labor, the individual character of consumption, the social character of consumption, production and consumption. And that this need, that organization that was the one that was contributed to the general social relationship, was presented to us, so to speak, from two points of view.

One point of view is that of the unity of that process of social life, and the question from that point of view is how it is done to assign to each member of society what particular useful work he is going to do, and consequently what means of production and what means of livelihood he is going to need. And from the point of view of each individual, of each member of society as an individual organ of this process of social life, to recognize oneself in that condition: to know what concrete useful work... Sorry, I swallowed a part: society has a mass of labor power in general that is carried individually by the members of society, and the problem of organization from the point of view of society is how each one is assigned what concrete useful form he is going to give to the portion of labor capacity in general to participate in the production process. From the individual

point of view, it is how the individual recognizes himself in his condition as an organ of that process.

If we look at the capitalist mode of production, what we had from the beginning is that society has this mass of labor power in general, but that individuals do not have it assigned directly, under specific concrete forms, in contrast to the previous modes of production, where this allocation is made through the bonds of personal dependence. Here it is a society of free individuals, it is not assigned what concrete form is going to be given to the expenditure of individual labor power: that was an attribute of the conscience and the will of these free individuals. Each one had his share of labor power in general, his capacity to perform abstract labor, privately and independently. And on this basis social labor was set in motion without *immediate* unity with social consumption: unity was established a posteriori, once the production process was completed, through the process of circulation, through the exchange of commodities, where the recognition of whether each individual had done socially useful or useless work, it was established through the representation of abstract labor. If it was socially necessary, if what he had produced from the social point of view made privately and independently, which was materialized in the commodity, was useful, it was represented as the value of that commodity. And so what appeared was this reciprocal recognition established indirectly through the determination of socially necessary abstract labor materialized privately independent of its product as the value of that product, and that product had the form of a commodity [...]. So, what we had was: from the point of view of the unity of social production and consumption, it is this way of organizing social labor and social consumption and establishing that indirect unity.

When we ask ourselves about the form, that same question from the point of view of each member of society, how each member of society is recognized as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism, what we found is that this recognition is not a personal attribute of each member of society. His capacity as a free individual to know whether he had acted correctly or incorrectly as an individual organ of the process of social life was realized after production and what that said was the commodity. If the product of his labour proved that it was indeed a commodity, which therefore contained value, in the process of exchange the producer of the commodity could recognize himself as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism. If what he had made was socially useless, that product was worthless, it was not a commodity, and the producer of that non-commodity belatedly recognized that he had not acted as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism in production and that he could therefore not participate in the process of social consumption. And what we had seen in consequence of this is that the free consciousness of the commodity producer is the form which his alienated consciousness has in the commodity.

We are now confronted with a consciousness that is free not because it is alienated in its commodity, but because it has full control over its individual labor as an organ of the process of social production, it knows to itself, objectively, which concrete individual organ it is of this process of social metabolism. So, the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production is the transformation of human freedom into what Marx proposed: it is an individual property that *at the same*

time has a social, collective character over the means of production. [...] We also saw in development that the working class is an attribute of capital. The abolition of capital by the working class, because it is the bearer of the development of these productive forces, because acting as an attribute of capital that is the function it has, is immediately the abolition of the working class; The working class therefore abolishes itself and becomes a society of free individuals in this sense: who immediately know themselves to be organs of the process of social metabolism. What does Marx propose? The condition for this, the form of this, is collective ownership of the means of production, because now social production and consumption constitute an immediate organ. It is only on the basis that this immediate, collective organ dominates its own means of production that it can immediately establish this unity with its own consumption.

So, what I find is this as development that advances in a more concrete way than the way in which Marx presents it: it is to be able to look, first, at who is the subject of the development of scientific knowledge; second, how the materiality of human labor is transformed, then, who is the bearer of that transformation in the materiality of labor, the capacity to organize unity, to transform not only the immediate materiality of labor, but to transform the social organization of labor on an objective basis: that is the working class. The working class, therefore, is the bearer of this development, which, until the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, is the development of alienation, because it is not the abstract negation of alienation: only with the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production is the overcoming of alienation. Before I finish being hoarse [Laughs], what would you like to raise about this?

Javiera: I have a doubt, Juan. Correct me: is the transformation of the materiality of work what allows the conscious technical application of science? I don't know if they addressed it last class, but I was left with the doubt of what drives that.

JIC: Let's see if I put it like this: Marx stops at the material process of labor already under the direction of the capitalist. In chapter I he talks about human work, he does not stop to look mainly at materiality. There he is going to talk about materiality, he is going to talk about the conscious character of the human labor process, that it is consciously governed. But if you look at what that labor is materially, what you have in front of you is that the commodity producer has full control of his individual labor, which is a part of the materiality of that labor. But what does that work consist of? What governs this control? He wields the tool and governs the movement of the tool with his brain, applies the tool with his arm to the work object, and transforms its materiality. And that is work, manual work.

When we look at the development of machinery, the tool comes out of the worker's hands and is part of an automatic mechanism. But to produce that automatic mechanism... I am going the other way: in this automatic mechanism the control of a series of natural forces is objectified. And the first thing to do then in the process of work is to develop control over those natural forces. It is necessary to develop the ability to objectify these natural forces in the machinery, so that now these natural forces are automatically discharged on the tool, the tool operates on the object of work and transforms its materiality. Here what we have

is a first step in the transformation of the materiality of work. There is a transformation (the first is earlier), the tool is no longer in the hands of the worker: now the tool is part of this automatic mechanism.

What does the work consist of? The work consists of developing the ability to control natural forces, of developing the objectification – which would be the technological part – of that control in machinery, of controlling that machinery operates correctly. These are all intellectual labor processes, not manual labor processes. This is a long development, but it is a movement towards human work materially consisting in the development of objective knowledge. And Marx puts this forward in the *Grundrisse*: he increasingly uses natural forces to make natural forces act on their own, he does not have to intervene in this transformation. So, this is the transformation in the materiality of work. I don't know if this was the end of it...

Javiera: Yes, that's more or less clear to me [...]. What I was referring to is... Because, you saw in the previous chapter, the XXIV, when he is talking about what this expropriation by the mass of the workers, of the capitalists as a whole, is going to mean, there he lists a series of things on which this expropriation is going to be carried out, and among those he talks about the technical application, Aware of science. So, what I was telling you is that this is something that is already developing with the transformation of the materiality of work.

JIC: That is the transformation of the materiality of work.

Javiera: Of course, but that is like a point of arrival, this conscious technical application of science. I mean what it entails, specifically.

JIC: That's why he makes a distinction there – he puts it several times – but if one looks at it in this development that I was doing, one can say: on the one hand there is the development of the knowledge of natural forces. What follows that knowledge, the unity with that knowledge, is the transformation of that knowledge into its objectification in machinery. And that is the technical application of science, it is: we know how a natural force operates and now we objectify the ability to control that natural force in a machinery. The movement from science to objectification is the technological application of science. I see you doubtful...

Javiera: I don't know... I mean, I understand you, but what happens is that I thought it implied something else, I stayed with that idea when at some point we talked about, well, this worker's intellectual, scientific character is going to develop later on, his handling of science, as if I thought he was going to give something more. Or I also thought that this thing that work is already directly organized, that is, in the end, the unity between production and consumption, and it is going to mean a different leap in terms of the development of science, as well as the application of science in... I don't know if I'm implying myself, but that I was going to something else, like...

JIC: A free consciousness will have a capacity for the development of science that goes far beyond the capacity of a consciousness that is free because it is

alienated. Science and the technical application of science constitute a unity: the development of science aims at the transformation of that knowledge into knowledge that operates. Knowledge operates through control, the objectification of the control of the natural force that science knows, and that is what one has in front of you.

When Marx makes a reference – which I mentioned last time, but which is in Volume 3 – to general human work, he does not refer to science and technology, but he does so indirectly by saying: it is every invention, every discovery. And if one looks at every discovery it is scientific development, and every invention is the technological application of that scientific development, and it unites it in the general character of work. The materiality of technical work is not different from the materiality of scientific work, because it is not manual work either, it is intellectual work: the design of the machine is intellectual work that has a character as objective as the character of scientific knowledge. I generally tend to use the term "scientific" to encompass both aspects. Marx sometimes puts it as a scientist, he says that science is not an attribute of the capitalist class, and he doesn't say "science and technology", he says "science". I tend to use "science" as encompassing the unity of that process where the materiality of the work is, in both cases, an intellectual work. I don't know if it's clearer, or if you want to raise something else, Javiera.

Javiera: No. Thank you.

Alejandro: I wanted to raise a couple of doubts that arise on the basis of this, thinking about how this problem of identifying the subject that in some way was going to be the one that was going to act revolutionarily to overcome the capitalist mode of production appeared in Marx; and I understand now that we come to identify it, it is the working class, But today we have this problem that perhaps that subject is insinuating itself into a particular organ of what the working class is, and many times that organ does not even recognize itself as working class. And my question is going to be at what point one can come to see that this subject of science is going to begin to recognize his own determinations as a worker; And just as there is this organ of the collective worker that carries science, you have the other fragments that are progressively submerged in the condition of surpluses, and these also do not even recognize themselves as working class because it appears to them as if they are marginalized. That, on the one hand, is a question I have about how this contradiction that exists within the different organs of the working class is going to be resolved in order to reach, if you will, that revolutionary subject.

And then my question is also that well, the absolute centralization of capital appears as a condition, and what I also see today is that this process of centralization is being carried out above national spaces, and it no longer has the form, as in the last century, that there was a partial centralization within a national sphere. So, what would be the action of the working class to operate on this process of centralization? Because I don't see any political program regarding that which I am interested in... not that it convinces me, but that it is not even coherent with respect to something achievable. I don't know if I understand myself.

JIC: Yes. On the first question, the problem is not when, but what to do to move in that direction. And the answer is: well, a political action of the working class that operates... I always say: no one can produce consciousness in another individual, but it does operate in the process in which another individual produces his consciousness, it is a concrete, necessary form of the political action of the working class to advance in the process of production of that consciousness which identifies itself as the working class. The contradiction is within the working class, just as the working class is an attribute of capital, it can have the most brutal forms of resolution that are inherent to the capitalist mode of production. So, nothing says that it will be a harmonious development and, as Holloway says, "unleashing the carnival of the oppressed" is very far from that. On the other hand, it is a question of the political action of the working class to be able to give to this development forms that do not at the same time involve the annihilation of part of the working class by the other part of the working class.

With respect to the second question, what one has to look at is whether in reality what does not underlie this apparent overcoming of nation states is the development of a world state, which is not the development of a world state where everyone enters symmetrically, but there is a national state that is the one that governs the movement of capital within other national states. which become organs of that national state which, contradictorily, expresses the development of unity, transforms, takes direct regulation of the world unity of the process of capital accumulation. And then, apart from the fact that today there are primitive forms of the world state, within these primitive forms of the world state this is manifest: that there are certain national states that govern the general unity of the movement of social life – again: with all the antagonistic character, with all the brutality that is characteristic of the capitalist mode of production.

This brings with it the problem of the political organization of the working class, recognizing itself in its universal unity and, as you proposed, this is far from manifesting itself immediately. Therefore, only the political action of the working class is the one that can be the bearer of engendering, giving concrete form to those conditions or those potentialities. Beyond that I cannot say anything more, because my individual capacity to advance in the development of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production is as important as it is. What I propose as a form of political action is to operate the process in which other members of the working class produce their consciousness, precisely by recognizing themselves as members of the working class, which is: as individuals who are free because they are alienated in capital. That is as far as I can answer. Beyond that, my individual capacity does not... Moreover, I believe that it is precisely an answer that cannot have an individual character, it can only be given by a collective subject who recognizes himself as a free subject because he is alienated in capital, because he is the bearer of the powers of capital, not that he is the bearer of powers that come abstractly to him from outside his general social relation. So, my political objective is to act in the production of that collective subject, and the starting point in the production of that collective subject is the production of this form of consciousness. Here it's not that I don't know if I answered or not, I hope I have answered you

[Laughs]. Because I know that this is the answer I give. I don't know if you want to raise something.

Alejandro: No, it's fine, I don't know if there's even an answer, that's how it's finished, but one doesn't stop having the question. And there is a question now that has come up again and that you mentioned at the beginning, as if summing it up, and given that I may not be there next Wednesday, this mention that you always make that no one can make another person aware continues to cause problems for me. I understand why you say this, Juan, in your argument, but it generates a conflict for me in the sense that the working class never ceases to be a moment in the reproduction of capital, and in that sense, one sees that within the family organ, that it never ceases to be that moment the reproduction of capital, personal links appear in the formation of the child's consciousness, which operate on the production of that consciousness. It is always a social production of that consciousness, but it never ceases to be a production for me, and just as Edgardo says[339], if operating would not be producing consciousness in some way. It is a question that I had at the beginning of the workshop and now it has come up again as a result of this.

JIC: Consciousness is the way in which each one governs his individual action as an organ of the process of social life. So consciousness is the individual product because I govern my action, another individual cannot govern my individual action, is that understood? If another individual comes to hit me (I'm going to take a response that is not conscious) and I protect myself, the other one caused me to govern my individual action in a certain way, but I was the one who ruled myself, he came to hit me and I couldn't say: "Hey, convince me, I have to defend myself." It is a very crude example. So, the difference is this: I govern my action. In the production of my capacity to govern myself action it is clear that social labor intervenes, but I cannot say that my action is governed by the other, is that understood? I don't know if it is understood or not.

So, I can operate in the process of producing the consciousness of another individual, but I cannot make my consciousness take the place of the consciousness of the other individual. Because every movement, every properly human action is a conscious action—to put it in this—and every human action has the form of an individual action. And therefore, the consciousness that intervenes in governing that individual action is the consciousness of the individual who is doing; That it is the product of the action of social labor is clear that it is, but that one cannot produce it to the other: one operates in the process in which the other produces his own consciousness. And what I am proposing as a form of political action is better than to operate in a process in which other members of the working class produce their consciousness. Why do I always say that the problem is not to convince? Because to convince would be to pretend that the other accepts that I am the bearer of his conscience and stops at the appearance that I must know why he has to do what he is going to do. And I, even if I were to convince another individual, it is the other individual who is convinced, it is the other individual who produces his consciousness by taking these elements. I don't know if it's clearer.

[339] **Edgardo** [Chat]: Isn't operating already producing the consciousness of another?

Alejandro: Yes Juan, I understand it, but what I'm going to get at is, for example, what happens when you act in that way that you say about not convincing the other, but about a very young child who has not yet fully developed that consciousness capable of producing itself. I don't know if I understand myself: it's not the same that they want to hit you as an adult as a child, let's say.

JIC: A newborn child has no consciousness, and consciousness is produced with its development. I don't know if this points to what you are proposing. He develops that awareness, but he is still what he is going to do... Conscious knowledge is a knowledge that knows that what it is doing is knowing, and the newborn [...] governs its action with a merely animal knowledge, and as it develops its capacity to organize its action, there comes a time when that capacity takes the form of conscious knowledge. Again, it is the consciousness of that already, not a newborn child, but of a child who is developing, but it is his consciousness. And a lot of adults will have operated as an expression of social labor in the process in which that child produced his consciousness, but they could not put themselves in the place of the child's consciousness. I came up with a bad example, but it's like saying: I'm going to digest for you. I can't digest for you. The brain, which is the organ, so to speak, of consciousness, my brain, cannot take the place of the brain of the other individual. So, I can operate in the process in which the other individual develops his brain (in this case his consciousness), he has his brain operated, but it is the other individual who makes his brain operate, my brain cannot function as the brain of the other individual (at least so far).

So, that's why [...], my brain is the "place" where my consciousness exists, let's put it like this, my consciousness cannot be put in the brain of the other individual. So, in that sense I say that consciousness is something that each individual develops with respect to himself, develops for himself. And I insist on this again: it is clear that social labor operates in this process, just as social labor operates in the process in which the individual develops his digestive system, because he puts food into it... Also when you take the expression of the boy, the boy is not able to produce his own food, the work of other individuals is what operates inside the stomach of this individual, but digestion is the digestion of that individual, it is not the digestion of others. That is why I say that no one can produce conscience. [...] Yes, Javiera, come on.

Javiera: I ask a question that is in line with what Alejandro said, so if not, then we will take it up later, but I throw it away now because if not, I will forget it later. I agree with what Alejandro says, we have been talking about it, I think I have been talking about this for many years, but for me it is clear that one cannot produce the consciousness of another, but what I wonder is if that form of political action that you propose is enough or does it make the collective form under which we are going to have, as a working class, to revolutionize the productive forces of this mode of production. That is, I wonder what role coercive conscience plays, or if it is going to play a role, I always have that doubt in what you raise about operating. Where is the coercive consciousness, how is this process going to be organized? Because, well, there Marx speaks, of course, at the end of chapter XXIV he says: well, the indignation of the working class is going to increase, with the same force

this mass of educated population, organized, by the same process, is going to increase. So, I ask myself, well, is it going to be necessary or not? In other words, it is going to be necessary to organize that process, it is going to be organized, I don't know, in what way. Isn't there going to be a role for a subject leading this process? How is this whole process going to be organized? I don't know, that's why I insist: I don't know to what extent that way that you... It has the power, or it is enough, or it makes the way in which we are going to have to carry out that revolutionary process, let's say.

JIC: What I said is that I know what my form of political action is. I mean, if this consciousness is a condition for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, because it cannot be the product of the fact that the capitalist mode of production has already been overcome and we now have a consciousness that objectively knows its determinations, because this is the condition for the socialist or communist organization of the process of social life. Therefore, it is a form of consciousness that necessarily has to be produced in the capitalist mode itself, if the capitalist mode of production does not produce this consciousness, then it cannot be overcome, because its overcoming has the form of the exercise of this consciousness. So what I'm saying is: this is a necessity that leads to... One can go further back and say: why did Marx write *Capital* in the Capitalist Mode of Production? Because it is a necessity of the capitalist mode of production.

So, I am not saying that *this* is *the* form of political action of the working class. What I am saying is: it is clear that the development of this consciousness is a form of the political action of the working class. It is only as a form of action of the working class that this consciousness can produce itself, it is not a problem of the abstract development of scientific knowledge. The concrete form that the scientific terrain that produces this consciousness takes is the political action of the working class. I don't know if it's clear why. Because it is the consciousness that carries the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. So, it was not born as a technical problem of production. Marx does not face the technical problem of production, what he faces is the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production.

I was going to put it later: I look at the development of the three volumes of *Capital*, but in particular of Volume 1, and I say: the unity of the development of Volume 1 is the consciousness of the alienated subject or bearer of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, it is the consciousness of the working class that knows itself as the consciousness of the subject that overcomes the capitalist mode of production. So, this is a form of political action, an aspect of the political action of the working class, which is a necessary condition for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. Without this there is no overcoming of the capitalist mode of production (externally put, because I say: if there is an overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, this is in its forms, and therefore it will be engendered).

This is the general movement. Then I said: this is *my* form of political action. Every individual subject is an individual organ that has individual powers; it does not have unlimited, infinite powers: it has individual powers, and I recognize myself, in this condition of an individual organ that has very limited powers, that

this is my form of political action. And this is the proposal. I am not saying that we all have this consciousness and the capitalist mode of production disappeared. And because of a whole series of determinations that make this, I cannot personify other revolutionary powers of the working class, I do not have the capacity to do so, I do not have the personal attributes to do so. So, it's not that: well, you have to do this and you have to do another... No, this development has a lot of concrete forms, but this is a necessary concrete form.

And one of the things that happens is that there are relatively few members of the working class today who are in a position to operate under this form of political action. What Alexander said before that this is a scientific consciousness and scientists do not recognize themselves as members of the working class, he already says how limited this form of action is. So, if I have to prioritize between forms of action, what I am faced with is that this is an action that needs to be developed, and that potentially there are few members of the working class today who face it as a necessity, to give their political action the form of that development. So, with all the more reason, I have to continue fighting in this sense and make this the axis of my political action.

Precisely, I do not want to convince anyone that this is their form of political action, it is something that has to arise from the needs of each individual singularity, and I do not want to convince because it would be a knowledge that stops at the appearance that what I am saying must be so. And that is why the knowledge that I propose is a knowledge that each one needs to develop integrally, the deployment of that knowledge by itself, as a process of original knowledge from the individual point of view, as a process of recognition from the social point of view. And that is where I operate in the form of my work, the concrete form of the social character of my work: to operate in that process. But until it is possible to put the brain inside the heads of others, there is no other way to produce consciousness than in this operation, in this way of confronting other members of the working class with the need to answer themselves about their own subjectivity by following this way of asking about that subjectivity. this method of wondering about that subjectivity.

I'm going to worry about my subjectivity and the need to, exactly, nourish the digestive system [Laughs]. So, I propose that we meet on Wednesday, let's discuss everything you want to discuss... I need to raise the question of the unity of Marx's development throughout his life, especially in contrast to those who speak of the "young Marx" and the "mature Marx", of all these things, where there is a process of development of knowledge, not that he knew the same thing when he was young... But this process of knowledge has a unity that begins very early on by saying: this is what I have in front of me, but I cannot explain why this is what I have in front of me, so to speak (Marx must have posed it to him as he did it). And how does it get to a point where it can say the same thing it said when it started, but now the need for what it was saying is unfolded. And well, and we continue to see these issues.

Alejandro: Next Wednesday I won't be there, so it's going to be the last time I'm going to be in the workshop, Volume 1 at least, I'll see it deferred for sure.

JIC: Well, of course if at some point they want us to meet again, we combine and meet again to discuss whatever they want. But hey, on Wednesday we will consider the stage completely completed.

Alejandro: Ok. Are you going to start with the articles of logging firewood, can it be?

JIC: No, it's a little later, a year later. See you on Wednesday.

[II (End of the workshop)]

Well, if there's anything you want to raise about what we were seeing last time in general, and we'll start with that. Nothing? Well, I raise two issues. One is something that I always raise: we have already come to look at the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production and the proposal that Marx makes in *Capital*, the proposal he makes in the *Grundrisse*, and the proposal that I made regarding the transformation of the materiality of labor and the socialization of private labor taken to its extreme. And what I wanted to say, what is missing in this development is that when one [...] wonders about how social production and consumption is organized once the capitalist mode of production is overcome, many questions arise about what that organization is going to be like, what form that organization is going to take.

And I always take the example of the discussions that are going on around the possibility of what that organization can be like, the proposal that it is going to be an assembly-based society, where all individuals are going to participate in the immediate organization through this process, and proposals that say no, It is impossible to develop a universal assembly, it has to be with representation, but with revocation of the mandate when those represented stop recognizing that representative as the expression of their own conscience. And my answer to that is that, in reality, either of these two forms is reflecting the social bond of the capitalist mode of production, where individuals see themselves as isolated individuals, lacking an immediate social bond, because that general social bond has the form of that indirect relationship established through commodities, then money, then capital; and that therefore, society would not be a collective organ that has individual organs, but that these images (they are part of the fetishism of the commodity) correspond to a set of isolated individuals that converge to form a collective organ, which is the image of the capitalist mode of production.

And if one is thinking of a society in which the socialization of labor is immediate, where each individual immediately knows himself to be an individual organ of the process of social life, of the process of social metabolism, and also as a concrete individual organ with respect to that process, the question does not present itself as the necessity of going to *constitute* society, but it is presented the other way around in the question of what concrete form this immediate recognition of the condition of the individual organ of something can take, which is in itself a process of social metabolism of which individual metabolisms are forms,

are bearers of that unity. And this presupposes answering the question of what the consciousness of a free individual who is not alienated is like, because that is the individual organ that is objectively known in this condition. And if one asks what it is like to be a free individual who is not subject to personal dependence on anyone because he has full control over his individual work as an organ of the process of social metabolism, what it is like to be a free individual in this, the answer one can give is that one cannot answer this respect for that condition. because one is not a free individual because one has full control over one's condition as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism, but one knows what it is to be a free individual because one is alienated in the commodity.

And then, one can come to the question what that free individual is not going to have in a society that has surpassed the capitalist mode of production, and the first thing one can say is that he is not going to have an alienated consciousness, but what it is like not to have an alienated consciousness is something that is impossible for us to answer because we have never had before us any concrete person who is the bearer of a conscience that it is not alienated, we are not. And this reminds me... On this point, I find something somewhat contradictory, where Marx states that the anatomy of the human being is the key to the anatomy of the ape, but not the other way around, because in the human being what is only in potency in the ape is fully developed. And here one faces this same situation. The problem with this observation is that one always has to act on something that is in potential, and then, if it is the monkey and has to act to transform itself consciously and voluntarily into a human being, it cannot wait for the existence of the human being to know its own determinations.

So, I have my answer to this contradiction of not being able to say what that subject is going to be like because that subject does not yet exist: my answer is that it is actually an irrelevant question. To ask today what the individual of socialist society is going to be like in terms of the determinations of his consciousness, beyond being able to say that he is not going to be alienated because he has full control over his condition as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism, beyond that is irrelevant insofar as one is not that subject. it does not organize its process of social life on that basis, nor can it do so because it is an organ within the general unit that is the capitalist mode of production, illusions or illusory constructions regarding the establishment of direct links outside the capitalist mode of production that goes beyond the general relationship of the capitalist mode of production itself, it is nothing more than an abstraction. But I return to this: in reality it is irrelevant to know what that individual is going to be like, because our problem [...] is what we do today to produce that subject.

When we began the workshop, I raised the question of the condition of the human being as a historical subject, of the human race as a historical subject, in that each human generation finds a world that has been transformed by the work of the previous generation and that, therefore, each human generation produces the one that follows it through its work. Work is a conscious and voluntary action, each human generation consciously and voluntarily produces the generation that follows it. And consequently, what we have in front of us is the problem of what we do today to advance in the production of that other subject. And this is the

question that is at stake and this is the immediate question as individuals free from political action. So, this is the, this is the question of what is at stake for us in relation to the production of that superior social form that the capitalist mode carries in its own development, carries the need for its overcoming under the concrete form of a political action that produces the material conditions, the full socialization of private labor, so that the point will come where the contradiction inherent in the socialization of private labor will be absolute and the overcoming of this contradiction will be realized in the immediate socialization of labor. Do you want to raise something? Is it moderately or minimally planned?

Ivan: I got lost in the link between the assembly organization (of the councils, I understand) with the problem of fetishistic consciousness. I understand that one cannot know what that other form of consciousness is going to be like, but I did not understand the criticism or the approach in relation to the assembly form.

JIC: What social relationship is the assembly organization a form of? This is immediately reflected in public legal relations. What is it that is proposed as the origin of a national state? There is an assembly that meets and constitutes national unity, dictates a constitution, there is a constituent assembly. What is the image, the representation that corresponds to this? That here there are a series of isolated individuals, free by nature, who lack a bond and come consciously and voluntarily to constitute a social unit. Thus, the determination of what is at stake is inverted: here there is a social unity that takes shape in the person of the individuals who are members of that unity. Thus, the representation of the assembly is proper to the capitalist mode of production: we have to come independently of each other to constitute unity, instead of starting from recognizing that we are a unity and that is why we act in this form as its individual organs. This is the meaning of the critique of the image of the assembly as an expression of having overcome the capitalist mode of production. But I don't know, Ivan, if this is...

Iván: No, of course, I thought he was coming for someone else... In other words, I don't know if you link that to the criticism of the proposal of the councils and the *soviets*, because in those cases they appear as assembly forms. I don't know if I would relate it directly to this bourgeois image of the social contract, because it seems to me that in the approach of councilism it appears, at least, not as free individuals but as individual members of a class, what the council groups together is belonging to the working class and to the place of production. I thought that this is what your proposal came from because, as for example in Trotskyism and in many left-wing organizations, whenever the critique of the state is thought of as an instrument of domination of the bourgeoisie, as in a Leninist key, and the problem of how to overcome the state and its political form appears, and in general the counterpart or the proposal comes from the side of forms of advice, of assembly...

In my case, they always seemed to me like experiences that seem interesting and that at times have been developed, but in general, historically they have shown little vitality. I think that in the Soviet Union the soviets lasted a year through assemblies and so on, they generated a process of demobilization there... And I also always had the doubt of how to organize such large population units; Today we are, I think, 8,000 million individuals, how can we organize them through assemblies?

For me, these are always questions that this type of perspective does not end up resolving. Because what underlies it is decentralization, they are proposals that are finally closely related to autonomist proposals, too.

JIC: Well, you gave the example of the soviets and the councils, which are organizations of the working class. The working class is an attribute of capital. This is what we saw, in this inversion of the social subject and the object, the working class is an attribute of capital; So, when these structures are formed, they are formed on the basis of the appearance that one must come to constitute unity, not that one is one... If one looks at it by making the parallel with national constitutions, there is also a cut: there is the cut that those of us who are with this attribute come to constitute a social unit. But that this is the form of consciousness, which cannot be recognized by saying "I do not come to constitute myself as a unity, I am unity, and then I do not have to convene an assembly so that unity can be constituted." Then, within the capitalist mode of production, the assembly form, the council, the soviet, will appear as following the natural order of social organization. The natural thing is to be isolated individuals who have to come to associate.

In socialism, or communism, calling it this society of free individuals who know themselves to be the individual organs of the process of social metabolism immediately, because they have full control over the social character of their work and their individual consumption, the question is, in that society, this form of consciousness is no longer that of those individuals: it is a form of consciousness that has been overcome along with the overcoming of the social relationship. Then, within the capitalist mode of production, the discussion of the structure of the organization appears. The problem with many of these expressions, these forms, is that they see themselves as having overcome the capitalist mode of production. And the expression that they have not overcome the capitalist mode of production is that they reflect the consciousness of an individual who sees himself as free by nature and who cannot recognize himself in his alienation.

So, from my point of view, the first step in the organization of that political action of the working class that recognizes itself as a historical subject, bearer of the need to overcome the capitalist mode of production, is to recognize itself as free individuals who have an alienated consciousness; not to see itself as abstractly free individuals who by their free will are organizing themselves, but as individuals whose free consciousness is the bearer of a necessity of the present general social relation, not in the abstract of the future social relation. So, this at least in principle is my response to what you were proposing, Iván. But I don't know if you want to propose anything else. Well, then this: that what is at stake as a historical subject is to advance in the production of that society and therefore in the production of those individuals, to be bearers of the powers that are proper to the current social relation, to the capitalist mode of production, to surpass itself, to annihilate itself. That is the... I don't know what I end up using. Let's say that the "axis", the "essence" or some more precise term of a political organization of the working class that proposes to give it body, to express the condition of the working class as a historical subject. And in my opinion, this is what appears, what underlies the development in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

If we look at which is the most powerful form of the development of the productive forces proper to the capitalist mode of production, the most powerful form is the production of relative surplus value; the most powerful form for the production of relative surplus value is the centralization of capital; and the most powerful form of the centralization of capital is the centralization of capital as the property of the working class. That is, then, the axis of the political action of the working class in its condition as a historical subject. What the *Manifesto* proposes in several of these aspects, has some expressions... That is, the transformation of the materiality of labor, the transformation of the productive subjectivity of the working class, and not under the name of "centralization of capital" but under the name of "centralization of the means of production as property of the state." So, for me this is... When it is raised, this is not *the* party of the working class. What the *Manifesto proposes* is: this is *a* party of the working class that expresses that condition of historical subject.

Do you want to raise something? [...] If there is no immediate proposal now, complete with what I had told you I was going to propose about the unity of Marx's production throughout his life, but since that unity is not an abstract unity, an abstract process of maturation – which some see as if it were a process of regression, rather than maturation – but it is having seen the essence of the question, but having seen the essence of the question, what must be unfolded is the concrete form in which that essence of the question takes shape. And you can find that in... I wanted to take three points, but one of the points... I can't find the appointment, damn it... [...] I can't find it, well. [...] Fernando, you wanted to raise something.

Fernando: Yes. Actually I was thinking about something that comes with what you raised before, I don't know if it's going to be enough for a very long discussion but well, I'll raise it. Iván just said that the experiences of assemblies seem to have had little power to personify or to be the concrete political form of what later appears in your answer as the centralization of capital in the hands of the working class, and not the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, although these forms of assemblies are presented as the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production. There is this proposal that you make about the Soviet Union that once capital is centralized in the hands of the state, what must be done is to produce relative surplus value, and that takes this form denounced as "bureaucratization" of the political way of taking over the Soviet Union. The question that comes to me here is, if one is advancing or intends to advance in the recognition of one's own determinations in pursuit of the generation of this consciousness that is recognized as an organ of the process of human life, of the process of social metabolism, and in the constitution of this society of freely associated individuals, What forms does this previous step have to take, which I understand to be a necessary previous step of centralization of capital in the hands of the working class, and if that same consciousness that is advancing in this construction of a consciousness of freely associated individuals can personify the necessary political form that the centralization of capital in less than the State has to take, as the highest form?

JIC: Let's see, the latter, what did you say?

Fernando: If that consciousness that is proposing to advance in the constitution of a society of freely associated individuals through recognizing itself as an alienated consciousness and an immediate organ of the process of social life is the necessary consciousness to also personify the centralization of the state in the hands of the working class and to do what it has to do, which is to produce relative surplus value. Because it is a consciousness that is proposing to advance in the construction of a consciousness that is freely organized as the very recognition of the organ of the process of social life. Do you understand the point?

JIC: I think so.

Fernando: Let's put it in a few words: if a Stalin is necessary, if he can personify that consciousness that is being built in that society of free associated individuals.

JIC: I'm going to answer you, dodging the... [Laughs].

Fernando: I said that it generated a lot of discussion, the other option is that [Laughs].

JIC: No, in this. Again, that's so far from being a present issue that... I don't have an answer for that. What is furthest away and I can answer that is this. The development of this consciousness can only be the product of the capitalist mode of production, because its existence is the condition for a higher social organization. And therefore, only in the capitalist mode of production can this consciousness develop, which goes from seeing itself as abstractly free by nature to recognizing itself in its condition of free consciousness because it is alienated. So when you take a Stalin, you're an individual who believes that he has a free conscience by nature. And the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production cannot take shape through a Stalin; I'm going to be more risky: it can't take the form either... Although it is more debatable whether Lenin was clear about what he was doing in terms of what was at stake, whether it was the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production or the centralization of capital as the property of the working class, the seizure of capital by the working class and the management of that capital.

One of the expressions of this I think is after the failed attempt at revolution of 1905, where Lenin states that... I don't remember if it is with whom the working class has to ally, but with whom the working class can identify (it is not the term either, but it does not matter, it will be understood). It is not with the petty bourgeoisie that it must be associated, in Lenin's terms, it is with the big capitalists, because they know how to manage the process of social production on a large scale, they are the ones who have that knowledge. So the working class needs these individuals, not the independent producer of commodities or in this case the petty bourgeoisie, who do not know how this organization is done. You have to think that Lenin proposed that revolutionary consciousness, the working class cannot produce it by itself, that it cannot go beyond a trade unionist consciousness, and that therefore, that consciousness has to be taken by enlightened elements of the other classes to the working class so that the working class can appropriate it and from there it can be the subject of its own revolutionary consciousness. So it's in

the middle of that image. Something that I don't remember where I read it, but that appeared as if Lenin after the revolution put forward as a slogan, which was "All power to the soviets" and the electrification of the Soviet Union. As if to say: here what is at stake is not the form itself, but the content that must be put into play.

Fernando: I didn't understand the latter, why not the form but the content?

JIC: Because it was the electrification of the Soviet Union. The form referred to when "All power to the soviets," but how do we electrify the Soviet Union? Does this entail a transformation in the organization of work or is it simply to strengthen something that is typical of the capitalist mode of production?

Fernando: Well, in the same sense there is the quote that Braverman takes from Lenin about that... I don't remember it well now, but something like Lenin says: well, once you take power, what you have to do is copy the United States and carry forward the methods of production of the United States. Okay.

Ivan: I think it says Henry Ford's, directly.

Fernando: That's it.

Ivan: And the other slogan I think was that "Socialism is soviets + electric power." What I don't remember, Juan, is that he proposed the alliance... In other words, it seems to me that it is clear that he strategically proposes for the government the alliance with the peasants, that there is the discussion with Trotsky about the concrete form of that alliance, who heads it and so on. Then it seems to me that in relation to what you say, I don't know if it's in the NEP, but that is, it's technical, isn't it?

JIC: No, it's from 1905. I don't remember what text it is, but it is on the eve or after the Revolution of 1905.

Iván: I would have to pay attention.

JIC: Yes, you refresh me by the way because I don't remember where it appeared. But I do remember this because we sometimes discussed it, more about the projection than the question itself, with Pablo Rieznik at a congress, at a table that was about some of this, which I don't know if he was... There were people from RyR[340], I don't remember, but this did appear, and I may have it written in something from the time. And it was this, moreover, to the extent that Lenin was proposing that what was at stake was the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, or what was at stake was that which in the end contained the continuity of the accumulation of capital.

Fernando: The other question that arises for me, Juan, is that this centralization of capital in the hands of the working class, which we have until now as a fragmented historical expression of that, what happened in the Soviet Union, how

[340] Reason and Revolution.

one can think and to what extent one can think how there could be or how the determinations of the political forms that this process of centralization has to assume could have changed – I insist, not that of overcoming the capitalist mode of production – in relation to how this change in what is the labor process was advancing. Because there are several proposals, I understand, about that, around the development of what is commonly known as "industry 4.0" and so on. I think that is an interesting point to think about.

Iván: Yes, also, on the flip side, the limit presented by this stage of the national development of the productive forces. That is to say, developments are always global, but when one looks at the concrete processes, the USSR is developing the productive forces in its national unity, China is making the same effort, and it would seem that these efforts at present, at least after the dissolution of the USSR and with the New International Division of Labor, also seem in vain. no? These national centralizations of capital. If Spain today nationalizes its productive forces, it would perhaps even seem more like a setback than an advance around the European Union, it seems that these nationalisms have become more reactionary, even in that way. It's something that drives me very crazy because it's like there's a change of mind that has to be done that is very difficult, like... The political imaginary of transformation.

JIC: First of all, there is all this. But the question of the state is the *world* state, it is the development of the world unity of the process of social life, one cannot reduce it to nation states. Now, what does the state mean...?

Fernando: A little parenthesis, Juan. I understand that, but now, I don't know, I light an incense and I think I'm Fidel Castro, and I say: well, I have to make the revolution in Cuba, I have to do my political action in Cuba. But my political action around building a global state is like... I mean, I don't even know where to start, do I become a UN official? I also raise it in that area, right?

JIC: Yes, I will answer you where to start: by developing a political organization that is based on the consciousness that knows itself to be a free conscience because it is alienated in capital. That is the starting point. One can say: "How far is that starting point from the result...", but that is indeed the starting point. Do you understand? The political organization that says: well, what I have to do is form the world state because the working class is exploited in all countries, therefore it only has a universal common interest; and I start with that, and I have to produce a new man, for which morality, which is a social relationship proper to the capitalist mode of production, plays a key role; And well, then I have to look at myself and say: well, in reality I am not doing what I say I am doing, the content of my action has a different character. So that's the answer.

How long until that? And even more, if one says that this consciousness needs to have become the universal consciousness for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, then much more is lacking. Hence the importance of political action that aims to advance in the process of production of this form of consciousness. I mean, this from my point of view is the starting point of the political organization of the working class as a historical subject. I see you as... I'm

not going to say "convinced" because I don't want to convince you of anything, but [Laughs].

Iván: I think the starting point is welcome, but I don't know yet... What I said about the political imaginary also happens, that I feel that this has a lot to do with how the experiences of the past act conditioning the consciences of the present, but I see the experiences of the past of the working class advancing in the centralization of capital and I see those national forms. So, this global form of political action is like it's unimaginable to me. Sometimes defeat can be thought of as a form of the unimaginable, but I don't feel defeated, so I'm not going to stop trying to make this projection, but it's hard for me to think about what it would be like, how to transform, how to transcend these national spaces. In other words, in part I feel like impotence, it's like I see, for example, I don't know, instances of global organization alienated from capital, and I see China and the United States that can't even agree to limit carbon emissions. I kind of see a world that has a hard time moving towards that global state, that is, with many disputes and tensions, as if showing all the private character that work assumes in capitalist societies.

JIC: That carries with it the expression of how much of that development is missing, which at the same time can have an explosive character and advance much more quickly than one may think. Because the whole development of the capitalist mode of production, when one sees the different modes of production, what we half accompanied the other time, how the productive forces developed, the individual character, the social character of labor...

Edgardo (Chat): I have to go. Unfortunately I can't participate because I'm in the work. Thank you very much for everything, Juan! See you in the workshop of Volume 3. A hug to all and I hope you continue with your political action!

JIC: Yes Edgardo, too bad, because Edgardo warns that he has to go. It's optimistic that we're going to see each other in the workshop of Volume 3 [Laughs], so a hug, Edgardo.

Well, back to this question... I'm going to make a total digression, but since it's going around in my head and maybe it requires some concrete action, of what could become a leap in the development of this consciousness that recognizes itself as free because it's alienated in capital, and that is linked to what is supposed to be happening, and because it happens more or less immediately, which is the development of artificial intelligence.

So far, what one looks at is the logical representation, the proper form of the method of scientific knowledge in the capitalist mode of production, because it satisfies the double condition that allows us to advance in the capacity to develop the material productive forces, in that it measures everything with more and more precision, establishes relations of measurement between the different concrete forms and, Operating on these relations of measurement, it transforms matter qualitatively. And at the same time, the ideological character that says that one cannot know objectively, that nothing can be transformed by itself, that all movement has to come from the outside, and ultimately the most complete thing is

that it cannot be known objectively, they are new ways of interpreting the world in different ways. In contrast to this, as a necessity proper to the capitalist mode of production, what appears is the development of dialectical knowledge not as an immediate material problem of production, as a question that will modify the immediate material character of production, but as a question that has to do with the development of the organization of social production in the form of the political action of the working class. But if artificial intelligence does everything it sets out to do, so to speak, it leaves human intelligence with only one function.

Artificial intelligence is based on the same thing as... It is the structure of logical representation, and it is remarkable how Hegel, in his time, says that if an individual is forced to think in terms of quantitative representation, of quantitative relations, he is forced to do the same thing that a machine already does. When I read that, I was surprised because I thought that calculators were from the early nineteenth century or the end of the eighteenth century, you can see that there were already machines to calculate. Well, now what appears is: if the machine to establish these links through measurement relations could do it on a more limited scale than a human brain could do, now apparently it will be able to do it on a much more powerful scale than that of a human brain. What is it that machine can't do? It cannot be handled outside of the immediate abstract affirmation that this is or this is not, it has all that structure. He cannot reason that free consciousness is the form of alienated consciousness, because free consciousness is free consciousness and alienated consciousness is alienated consciousness, and it is a logical contradiction to assert that free consciousness is the form of alienated consciousness.

So, the question that arises for me is whether with this transformation in the materiality of work, where what until now needed to be, "in hands", in the brain of human beings, does not become all the function of the machine, and what remains for the immediate productive operation of the human brain is this capacity to ideally reproduce the real movement of matter, that only an artificial intelligence that was typical of an organic being could do it. I don't know if this is understood. That as long as it is proper to a mechanical structure of external relationship between things, it cannot do so; Only an organic machine that was the same as the human brain could ever make this development. And then, the question is whether in the development of the productive forces, human labor is not going to have a strong transformation that requires the powers proper to the development of dialectical knowledge. And that then the generalization of this form of consciousness that is dialectical knowledge will appear as a problem of the materiality of labor. With the contradiction, for the capitalist mode of production, that this entails an awareness of the limited historical character of the capitalist mode of production and of the need to overcome it.

And that if that were so, if this had some real content, a substance, the process of transformation of consciousness as a condition for the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production can be much closer to what until now seemed that it could only be developed as the form of political organization of the working class as a revolutionary subject and that it becomes a form of consciousness that operates directly in the material process immediate production. But hey, that's a quasi-

science fiction concern. So it is linked to what you were proposing, Ivan: how far away the possibility of the development of that world unity as a world unity may seem, not as a sum of fragments that see themselves as mutually independent, when they are organs of world unity, and the forms of political action of the working class. If this were so, it would be all the more urgent to advance in the political organization of the working class on the basis of this form of consciousness.

Javiera (Chat): I didn't understand you about the organic machinery, Juan.

JIC: It would have to be the same as a human brain, which is an organic form of matter. The other what it does is to make external relations between things. In order to be able to make the relation in which I reason that this is affirmed by its own negation, it cannot have the structure of "yes and no" relations, it has to have relations that so far are only attributes of a portion, so to speak, of organic matter, which is the human brain. Well, then it would seem that it would not be a computer, because the computer comes precisely from *counting*, from establishing measurement relationships. It would have to be in the form of an organic structure such as the human brain.

Javiera: Okay, but what would that be like?

JIC: I don't have the slightest idea [Laughs], beyond stating it like that, I don't have the slightest idea. I don't know, but up to here it would have to have that same shape. Maybe that, the human being in his process, in his condition as a historical subject, ends up producing that.

Javiera: But that would be like giving the machine reproducible conditions that it doesn't have today, for example.

JIC: No, it doesn't. The machine, the so-called "artificial intelligence", all it does is establish external relationships based on the measurement of objects, of the concrete forms on which it operates. When he answers, he answers on the basis of the information he has, he measures that information and says: here there are 10,000 who think that they say that this is white, and there are 500 who say that it is black, so he answers, measures and says... 10,000 say that he is white? → It's white. And if it is white, it cannot be black. That's the essence of the...

Iván: Actually, he says: "Most people say he's white, although there are others who think he's black," because he's first and foremost progressive [laughs].

Javiera: Yes, he answers contradictory things anyway, he agrees with you. You kind of ask him something first, he answers, then you ask him something else and he gives you the reason for the other thing. But that would be like... Nothing, like the machine was in your brain.

JIC: No, as if there was a machine that was equal to the human being.

Javiera: Therefore, it would be to provide the machine with reproducible conditions that it does not have today.

JIC: To make him a human being. Maybe it's in the developed form of the human being. This is science fiction [laughs].

Javiera: But that's why if you have the computer in your head, like... You have all the information in the world in your head. I mean, you can do other very powerful things with that.

Iván: What happens is that today what the machine does is... In other words, with these questions that one asks it, it is like assembling, of the question, *tokens*, that is, each word individualizes it, erases the words that are called *stop work*, which are called "of", "the", etc., and compares those keywords with a lot of bibliography that it has, and from that it copies and completes the text so that it has a kind of syntactic coherence. So the machine is not thinking, it is just like... He knows well where to play.

JIC: Yes, that's why: it's not that structure with which it works... It can't do what the human brain does... [Connection drops at 1:08:30]

Iván: Juan left us.

Javiera: There is another film called "The Years", something like that. No, sorry, it's not a movie, it's a series, "The Years", I think, it's very good.

[...]

JIC: The same thing happened to me today with the workshop of Volume 3, I don't know why the ...

Fernando: Skynet doesn't like us talking about what you're talking about.

JIC: [Laughs] It's possible. Well, Fernando, did you want to raise something? Then I would like us to talk about the operation of the workshop and so on.

Fernando: No, but it came from the side of this, precisely, what I was already proposing at the beginning of the changes in the productive processes, and that appears to me in that way as well, that is, of what potential to centralize capital on a global level through these same changes, and that the political forms of that centralization for me do not have much to do with the historical experience of what is the centralization of capital. I understand that it is a bit like what I was proposing, if one says: well, in the form of these technical changes in the production processes, centralization is advancing worldwide in a different way.

I take advantage of your science fiction digression: one can say that this advances artificial intelligence controlling production processes worldwide, centralizing them. And then, we would not have in front of us the specific problem that Iván poses of centralization in the different national fragments, but that

problem of the national fragments is going to have to be solved in this same centralization that is being done by the organization of production processes through artificial intelligence. I don't know if you understand what I am proposing.

Iván: Yes, what I understand is that we are at a stage where it necessarily seems that the process has to be global, that is, there is no way to stop that, right? Juan puts on a face, but... A little bit this comment comes from the fact that we are also "programmed" to think about these experiences. That is to say, there is also a leftist imaginary closely associated with the national processes of revolutions and transformations. I know that it is not the spirit of the workshop, where we saw the transformations of relative surplus value, but that is at stake all the time in the discussions that one gives. I think that another current in which this problem also appears strong are the so-called "accelerationists", who have a very debatable position for me in many aspects, but they also pose as a critique the national limits of policies and transformations, and preach for a much stronger development of the productive forces. What happens is that what comes to mind, which for me is super problematic, is that they say: well, let's develop the productive forces with everything, that is going to bring down capitalism, but since it probably generates unemployment and so on, that there is a universal basic wage or allowance for all, that is, it is as if in the transition of this process what they see are unemployed masses.

JIC: Yes. Some time ago I was reading things along these lines, I don't remember much anymore what I had seen and what the question revolved around, but I remember that there was an abstraction there with respect to taking immediate appearances and not having any more contradictory content than those immediate appearances. But now I would have to look at it again, because Nicolás Grinberg had raised it with me, I don't know what discussion I had with some authors of this and that's why I was watching it.

I propose that we do two things. First I propose to you this of the unity that for me is present throughout Marx's development; And I'd like to hear from you about the workshop, what you would raise about the workshop.

Javiera: Juan, I have a question about the above. I mean, not what we were just talking about, about development, about what you raised a while ago, well, whether it's not irrelevant to ask about this subject who wouldn't be alienated, right? So, what we have ahead of us is to ask ourselves about our own action and about what political action to develop to advance in the recognition of... That is, to point to a subject who recognizes his determinations and advances in the recognition of his alienation. So, having said that, I ask myself when you are proposing that, are you thinking of a subject with certain attributes? Because one could sign up as well, this political action, for example, the workshop, is not a political action to which every member of the working class could join, let's say, I imagine that we all agree on that. So, it is a political action that is pointing out a subject with certain attributes, right?

JIC: Those are the objective conditions of the production of that consciousness. The first objective condition is that there is a substantial part of the world's

population that cannot even eat. So, if we are proposing the development of a form of consciousness, which is a scientific consciousness, the first condition is to have been able to eat more or less to be able to get there. It is a form of political action, like all forms of political action, proper to the portion of the working class that is objectively in a position to develop this consciousness. That is the limitation that arises from the capitalist mode of production itself.

Javiera: Of course, and then, what happens to the rest of the members of the working class? I mean, I'm asking it in a more general way.

JIC: And what about the members of the working class who are scientifically conscious and who are completely alien to the question? I have an answer. I say: for me it is essential to start from recognizing oneself as a political subject with respect to one's own powers and the limited character of those powers. So, I can say: what is at stake here is a political action that aims at the development of this consciousness, and I have no answer for the other forms of political action. That the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* does not say that the Communist Party is *the* party of the working class, it says that it is *a* party of the working class that what it proposes is to act as a party that expresses the condition of the working class as a historical subject. So, the answer is, what one can propose as a form of political action, and when I propose it as my form of political action, the scope of my political action is this, I do not give for anything else, I am not good for anything else. One has to start by recognizing that limitation, if not, the image appears that you have an answer for everything, and that you can personify everything. And the question is even the other way around, because you made reference to those of us who are here: and why do those of us who are here in the workshop have the power as political subjects if we each look at ourselves, essentially, in what area do we have power as political subjects?

Javiera: Shall we answer you?

JIC: If you want, answer, if I don't leave it as a question, but in what area do we have...?

Javiera: I mean, we can leave that for the end, but wait, I'm not questioning you about your political action and about the limitations of...

JIC: I am answering you for my political action, because I have no answer to the political action of the working class in its unity.

Javiera: Okay, but I was talking about something more general, because of this... Well, if this has the scope of being something global, generalized, how is it going to expand from this portion of the working class that has these scientific attributes, is it going to become something more general?

JIC: The problem is that today it does not even aim to be minimally partial. So, in order to have that answer, it would need to be present with enough development so that what is posed is: well, how do you go about transcending this scope that you have so far? And it doesn't even have a reach that reaches... It has a minimal

expression. So, the answer is: on all fours it is possible to answer how to expand its minimum expression to that portion of the working class that has certain productive attributes, which at the same time to a large extent are the negation of what one is proposing as a form of political action, because they are the opposite of this: One of the things is that the more rigorous the knowledge of the scientific method, of the logical representation that one has, the more difficult it is to accept that this is a historical form of knowledge that carries within itself the negation of objective knowledge.

So that's why I always do the... I look at the process and say: this is the consciousness of a mode of social production, that labor already has a directly social character, it is not mediated by the private form. That's as far as I can look at it. I want to look more specifically at that and I say I don't know how that is. If I were to try to answer myself how that is, I would have to begin to transform that dialectical knowledge into a representation—which would not even be a logical representation, it would be a fantastic representation to a large extent. And so, the answer to how this necessary political action of the working class develops, when one looks at the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production in its unity, the answer one has is: I don't know, I have no way of being able to answer it. That is why my proposal has always been: when this form of consciousness has reached a certain degree of development, it will be able to produce the answer to the question.

One can say, taking what Ivan said, that one of the conditions is that the working class has full access, both the employed and the unemployed working population, to the development of its scientific consciousness. So universal education, and the development of universal education, is a concrete form. But the concrete forms of the very development of universal education today exceed the reach of a consciousness that knows itself to be free because it is alienated, and therefore it is an action that takes shape in the political organization of the working class that is not necessarily the immediate bearer of that free consciousness because it is alienated. but that it sees itself as naturally free, and that what it is doing is developing the freedom of the working class. But this is typical, then, of another political organization of the working class, which does not consider the condition of alienation, but, on the contrary, is going to represent itself as free by nature and what it is doing is affirming human freedom. How is unity established in all these ways? I can't answer, I don't know. Is it?

Let's go to the development of Marx. I don't know why they had thought that the starting point was poaching. There is a proposal there, but there is not the proposal of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, there is the proposal of what appears, in my opinion from a point of view, linked to Hegelian conceptions (according to Luis Denari, I had already passed that point, but the form that is written for me is this), which is the clash with whether the state is the representative of the unity of social life, And the State is confronted as "opposed", so to speak, private property, as in the legislation of poaching, the State, instead of expressing the need for social unity, expresses the interests of private property. But the text I am going to refer to is the text of *The Jewish Question*, which is the discussion of the demand of the Jewish population in Germany to be recognized as

citizens (because they did not have the full rights of citizenship), and what Marx is closing the development with.

I take from here. He says: "All emancipation is the *reduction* of the human world, of relationships, to man himself." He says:

> Political emancipation is the reduction of man, on the one hand, to a member of bourgeois society, to the *independent egoistic individual*, and, on the other hand, to the *citizen of the state*, to the moral person.

And at the core is this:

> Only when the real individual man recovers the abstract citizen in himself and becomes, as an individual man, a *generic being*, in his individual work and in his individual relations; only when man has recognized and organized his 'forces proper'[341] as *social forces* and when, therefore, he no longer separates the social force from himself in the form of *a political* force, only then is human emancipation accomplished.[342]

But there was something else... Out there I falsely remembered something else. So, what is raised there is the political struggle, in this. The demand for citizenship is the demand to become a doubly free individual. It is the demand to be this that is raised here, on the one hand a citizen of the state, and on the other hand it is to be an independent private producer, or at that time it still appeared to him as "independent private property". So, he says: that struggle is not the full struggle for human freedom. And he is going to make a differentiation between the freedom of the subject of the capitalist mode of production and human emancipation, where what he is going to propose is: only when individual forces can be recognized, the individual condition as an immediate organ of the process of social life, that political force, that struggle for freedom in the condition of citizen, it becomes the force that brings about human emancipation, when there is an immediate identity between the individual and the social unit.

I thought he was here, but now I can't find him in what I was seeing. Because somewhere it is going to state: and the condition for that is the collective ownership of the means of production, the directly social ownership of the means of production. And so here he is proposing, as far as I am concerned: because one is an individual free from the capitalist mode of production, that political action is the bearer of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production, of human emancipation. And human emancipation is the immediate unity between the process of individual life and the process of social life, which implies the abolition of private property. So, for me, there is the question of the overcoming of the capitalist mode of production and the axis of that supersession. But what is not posed is why, how, where do these own forces come from, which the human being has to recognize as such and put them to work as social forces. And that what Marx does from there is to seek, to unfold, how to get from today's society to that point

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[341] Own forces.

[342] It's all in the last paragraphs of section I of *On the Jewish Question*. Taken from: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0Az3tqIJXECNjFvNmZEeTZZbms/view?resourcekey=0-6Rkn4pEtHed8mh8xoTBOMA

of human emancipation. And when he writes the *Grundrisse* (between this text and the *Grundrisse*, if I'm not mistaken, there are 12 years of development), he is going to raise this question very early on (but damn it, I can't find it), as a synthesis.

In the historical development of the productive forces of humanity there are three great stages. The first stage is born from the animal organization of human life, and the simple animal organization of this incipiently human being, and takes form, develops on the basis of relations of personal dependence. The second stage is the one that develops on the basis of an impersonal, objectified social relationship, and creates the conditions for the third stage, which is what corresponds to what appears in *The Jewish Question*, which is human emancipation. And the third stage is based, then, on the immediately social ownership of the means of production. And it has a note in that development that says the capitalist mode of production, precisely because the social relationship is impersonal, it is objectified, what it produces are universal powers, universal needs, and there are... Fernando is more efficient than me [He puts the quote in the chat]:

> Relations of personal dependence (at first on an entirely natural basis) are the first social forms, in which human productivity develops only in a restricted environment and in isolated places. Personal independence based on dependence on things is the second important way in which a system of general social metabolism comes to be constituted, a system of universal relations, of universal needs, and of universal capacities [**JIC:** Precisely because it erases all personal differences in the bond].

Fernando: I have the quote here, if you want, I will read what follows.

JIC: If my edition, which is historic... I went through the page ten times and didn't... He says: the second, "free individuality founded...". And if you remember, when we saw the last paragraph of the chapter on primitive accumulation, where it says that the abolition of private property based on the exploitation of the labor of others does not regenerate private property, what it produces is the individual ownership of the means of production that are collectively owned; and here this appears again, where each individual is at the same time as an individual organ of the process of social metabolism, to which all the power belongs, and is the bearer of all the power of that social organism. I'm still now, thank you, Fernando, that's how I do it...

"Free individuality based on the universal development of individuals and on the subordination of their collective productivity as a social patrimony, constitutes the third stage. The second creates the conditions of the third, both the conditions. Both patriarchal and ancient and feudal conditions disintegrate with the development of trade, luxury, money, exchange value, etc., to the same extent that [?] is growing in modern society." So, here for me in the *Grundrisse*, there is a kind of development of what Marx sees in *The Jewish Question*, but who cannot give it substance. And now, in the development of the productive forces, it is that this substance is unfolding and that it is being expressed in the transformation that the form of the social relationship undergoes. And this is what is finally unfolded in Capital, from its simplest specific determination – the private character of labour – to the overcoming through the socialisation of private labour as a necessity that

springs from the objectified social relation itself and which entails the growing socialisation of private labour to the absolute overcoming of the private character of labour.

So, in contrast to what they say that there is "young Marx" and an "old Marx", that one spoke of alienation and the other speaks of economy, what they talk about is human emancipation, of the concrete determination of the process of human emancipation. He unfolds the content of that process that at the beginning he does not have in front of him, and that he will only be able to capture in *Capital*. And that then yes, there is a young Marx and an old Marx, that both face the same question, only that one can only discover that this is what is at stake, and as one matures, what one does is to be able to give the reason why that is what is at stake[343].

[343] He ends by proposing to pause before everyone discusses the workshop. They decided that it would not be recorded.